

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

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

**Forty-seventh session**  
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**6-16 July 2025**

**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda:**  
**State of conservation of World Heritage properties**

**Summary**

This document presents a global and analytical overview of Item 7 on the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties.

The document is composed of three main parts. After an Introduction (Part I), it presents progress achieved in a number of statutory matters related to Reactive Monitoring (Part II) and a focus on other conservation issues (Part III), which might have strategic or policy implications.

**Draft Decision: 47 COM 7, see point IV**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. World Heritage properties reported on at the 47th session

1. As part of the Reactive Monitoring process<sup>1</sup>, the World Heritage Committee will examine, at its 47th session, the reports on the state of conservation (SOC) of **248** World Heritage properties as follows:
  - **56** properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Agenda item 7A) and for which reports have to be reviewed annually by the Committee, in conformity with Paragraph 190 of the Operational Guidelines,
  - **189** properties inscribed on the World Heritage List for which state of conservation reports were requested by the World Heritage Committee at its previous sessions (Agenda item 7B), out of which 17 reports were requested upon inscription of the corresponding sites on the World Heritage List;
  - **3** additional properties that have also come under threat since the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2024 (Agenda item 7B),
2. The 248 properties for examination are distributed as follows:

Agenda item 7A	NAT	CLT	Total
AFR	10	3	13
ARB	0	24	24
APA	2	4	6
EUR/NA	1	6	7
LAC	2	4	6
Total	16	40	56

Agenda item 7B	NAT	MIX	CLT	Total
AFR	12	3	17	32
ARB	1	2	21	24
APA	18	0	31	49
EUR/NA	14	2	44	60
LAC	10	2	15	27
Total	55	9	128	192

### B. Information on the state of conservation reports submitted by States Parties

3. A substantial number of reports were received within the statutory deadlines of 1 December 2024 and 1 February 2025. For this 47th session, **83.3%** of all the reports requested by the World Heritage Committee were received by 1 February 2025 and **91.8%** by 15 February 2025:

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<sup>1</sup>For further details on this process, please visit the dedicated page on the World Heritage Centre's online State of conservation Information System at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>.

Statutory deadlines	1 Dec.2024		1 Feb.2025	
Flexibility granted...	1 Dec.2024	15 Dec.2024	1 Feb.2025	15 Feb.2025
Number of reports requested by...	153	-	93	-
Number of the requested reports received by...	108	31	66	21
% of the requested reports received by...	70%	20%	71%	22.5%
Total % of the requested reports received by 15 Dec.2024 or by 15 Feb.2025	90%		93.5%	
Total % of requested reports not received by 15 Dec.2024 or by 15 Feb.2025	10%		6.5%	

At the time of writing this document, 97.5% of all reports due have been received (six reports were not received at all).

4. It should be acknowledged that since the establishment of the 1 December deadline by the Committee in 2015, the Secretariat has never been provided with such a high number of States Parties reports, even with a 2-week flexibility (91.8% of all requested reports have been received compared to 52% on average since 2016, with a peak at 64% in 2019). To achieve such a high response rate, the Secretariat has multiplied its communications with the States Parties concerned, highlighting that it was essential that reports be provided within the deadline requested by the Committee, for organizational reasons, to enable technical analysis and to guarantee sufficient time for dialogue between the States Parties, the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies. States Parties concerned were also informed sufficient time prior to the deadline that reports received after the requested deadline would not be considered, and only the information already in the hand of the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies would be presented to the Committee at its 47th session.
5. It should be also noted with appreciation that this year again, most of the States Parties reports followed the statutory format included as Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines. The respect of the format greatly improves the treatment of the information and facilitates the monitoring of the implementation of previous Committee decisions.
6. Delayed submission of reports requested by the Committee and/or late submission of additional information by the States Parties, and in some cases the absence of reports, inevitably reduce the time available for dialogue between the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies on the issues at stake. It also entails that an increasing number of SOC reports are included in the Addenda documents, thus reducing the time available for Committee members to review them before the Committee session.
7. Although the sharing of information on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties is crucial, States Parties should be reminded about Decision **35 COM 12B**, Paragraph 16, by which they were requested by the Committee to consider **refraining from providing additional information regarding State of conservation issues after the deadlines** indicated in the Operational Guidelines, as this information cannot be reviewed in due course.
8. The World Heritage Centre would also like to acknowledge that 68.6% of all reports received have been made fully accessible to the public at [http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/47com/documents/#state\\_of\\_conservation\\_reports](http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/47com/documents/#state_of_conservation_reports) with the agreement of the States Parties concerned. The online availability of such an important number of SOC reports greatly contributes to the transparency of the Reactive

Monitoring process and States Parties should be commended for allowing such online publication.

### C. Selection of the World Heritage properties to be proposed for discussion

9. By Decision **43 COM 7.1**, the World Heritage Committee, at its 43rd session (Baku, 2019), supported the proposal by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to only propose for discussion the following SOC reports:
  - If removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed,
  - If inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed,
  - If deletion of the property from the World Heritage List is proposed.
10. It also allowed Committee members to add to this list the reports they wish to discuss, as follows:
  - a) **Four weeks** prior to the opening of the Committee session, if possible, the list of the SOC reports proposed for discussion by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies (as per criteria detailed in paragraph 9 above) will be shared with all States Parties to the Convention;
  - b) **Sufficient time** in advance of the Committee session, Committee members –and **only Committee members**<sup>2</sup>– may add to this list the reports they also wish to discuss, providing:
    - i) A written request to the Chairperson of the Committee, through the World Heritage Centre,
    - ii) The reason why the additional report needs to be opened for discussion;
  - c) **At least 10 days** prior to the opening of the Committee session, the list of SOC reports to be discussed shall be closed and immediately made available to all States Parties;
  - d) **During the Committee session**, the Chairperson shall directly give the floor to the Committee member, which requested a specific SOC report to be discussed, to explain the reason why it wished to discuss the report.

## II. STATUTORY MATTERS RELATED TO REACTIVE MONITORING

### A. Follow-up to the 2019 evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process

***Note:** This Section should be read in conjunction with the 2019 Evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process, available at the following web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>.*

11. At its 40th session (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), the World Heritage Committee highlighted that the Reactive Monitoring process was perceived as a key indicator of the effectiveness of the Convention itself and that this process provided a unique global overview of the state of conservation of heritage. It was stressed however that its content and its procedures were not always clear. In addition, Committee members highlighted that the List of World Heritage in Danger is unfortunately often negatively perceived. The Committee decided to formally address these issues (Decision **40 COM 7**).

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<sup>2</sup> Requests emanating from States Parties non-members of the Committee will not be taken into account.

12. To implement this decision, the World Heritage Centre conducted an evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process, thanks to the generous support of the State Party of Switzerland through the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). This evaluation included a prioritized set of recommendations to address the improvement of practices, for implementation by all stakeholders. The recommendations were sorted according to their level of priority (high, medium, low).
13. At its 43rd session (Baku, 2019), the Committee took note with appreciation of the evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process and, noting that the recommendations formulated in the evaluation referred to improvements of the current practices and did not call for structural changes nor amendments to the statutory documents, requested all stakeholders of the Convention to take them on-board and implement them at their level as soon as possible (Decision **43 COM 7.1**). The Committee also requested the World Heritage Centre to prioritize the implementation of the high priority recommendations, with an initial focus on those relevant to communication, capacity-building and finance.
14. Subsequently, the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, prepared a matrix for implementation of those recommendations, which was presented to the Committee at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021). On this occasion, the Committee welcomed the matrix structure developed and requested the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, to prepare an Implementation Plan and, in line with Recommendation 34 of the evaluation, suggested that a report to the Committee on progress in the implementation of the recommendations be presented at its 47th session.
15. The Implementation Plan proposed, together with the progress in the implementation of each recommendation, can be found at the following web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>.

### **III. CONSERVATION ISSUES**

#### **A. Emergency situations resulting from conflicts**

16. Conflict (including armed conflict and civil unrest) remains a major threat to many World Heritage properties. Approximately half of the 56 properties currently on List of World Heritage in Danger were inscribed for reasons related to the potential or ascertained impact of conflicts.
17. In the Middle East, cultural heritage remains vulnerable due to armed conflicts and hostilities. The impact of the conflict on cultural and natural heritage in the Gaza Strip remains of concern. Concerns also remain for the site of Sebastia, which is on the State of Palestine's Tentative List and is located in the West Bank. In Sudan, the conflict has posed threats to World heritage Property, sites on the Tentative List and museums, weakening adequate conservation and management, while in Yemen the situation has been exacerbated by severe weather events and management capacity continues to be impacted. In Iraq, Libya and Syria, corrective measures and the definition of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) have been elaborated remotely for some properties, while Reactive Monitoring missions are being organized for World Heritage sites in Syria. Military escalation has also resulted in damages in the World Heritage Property "White City of Tel-Aviv – the Modern Movement" in the State of Israel.
18. In the Africa Region, several World Heritage properties continue to be affected by the direct and indirect impacts of armed conflict and civil unrest. The situations in Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Niger are still vulnerable. These ongoing conflicts threaten the Outstanding Universal Value

(OUV) of properties and cause tragic loss of human life and deterioration of humanitarian conditions, including for members of the management authorities or military forces protecting the sites.

19. In addition to ICOMOS, IUCN, and ICCROM, UNESCO has partnered with the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH) and ICONEM, among others, for strengthening the protection of some sites in emergency situation. For example, the work of ALIPH in planning the restoration of palaces in Bandiagara (Mali), the upgrading of tourist sites and sacred places, and initiatives for reconciliation and social cohesion has been positive. ALIPH has also been a key partner in the implementation of safeguarding measures for the Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam (Afghanistan), ensuring the long-term stability and conservation while maintaining continuity in emergency interventions.
20. The ongoing war in Ukraine continues to threaten the state of conservation of World Heritage properties, particularly those in Kyiv, L'viv and Odesa. These properties were inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2023 due to the potential danger posed by the war. In response, and within the framework of *UNESCO's actions and emergency assistance programme for Ukraine*<sup>3</sup>, the World Heritage Centre, in close cooperation with ICOMOS and ICCROM, focusing on strengthening Ukraine's capacity to undertake urgent protection and recovery measures for cultural heritage. This support includes technical assistance, training and guidelines to help sites managers develop emergency preparedness and response plans. However, the war has significantly delayed the development or updating of management plans for these properties, particularly those that were in progress prior to the war and the development of DSOCRs and corrective actions has also been hampered.

## **B. Recovery and Reconstruction**

21. Recovery and reconstruction pose significant challenges at World Heritage properties affected by conflict and disasters, including those arising from the impacts of climate change. Ongoing direct damage to these properties, coupled with the sometimes fragile state of historic structures, economic instability, inadequate infrastructure and lack of maintenance, threaten attributes conveying the OUV of inscribed properties.
22. UNESCO's response, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies and local and international partners, has been extensive in safeguarding the OUV of affected properties. Actions have ranged from risk and damage assessments, urgent stabilisation and consolidation, surveys, documentation, and comprehensive restoration and rehabilitation. Some key actions involving UNESCO and its partners in recent years include urgent works at the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda) and the Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania), where international cooperation, local communities and traditional knowledge have played a key role.
23. Confronted by frequent earthquakes impacting its rich heritage, the State Party of Haiti developed a project to raise awareness of seismic threats to the population living within the National History Park – Citadel, Sans Souci, Ramiers World Heritage site. The project, supported by the World Heritage Fund, includes a compilation of technical specifications for earthquake-resistant reinforcement for the site. Additionally, following the 2020 fire that destroyed the Chapel of the Church of Milot within the site. The heritage agency of Haiti, with support from the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF), had requested the production of key architectural documentation of the church before the

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<sup>3</sup> Latest report to the UNESCO Executive Board available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388761.locale=en> .

fire, and this documentation is now being used to inform and guide the rehabilitation process.

24. Following the launch of the flagship initiative “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” in February 2018, UNESCO has mobilized USD 115 million from 15 International partners (including the United Arab Emirates and the European Union), and has successfully carried out the rehabilitation and recovery of the Old City of Mosul, which is on Iraq’s Tentative List. In collaboration with the Government of Iraq and the local communities, reconstruction projects completed include rebuilding historic landmarks, such as Al-Nouri Mosque and its Al-Hadba Minaret, the Convent of our Lady of the Hour and Al-Tahera Church, as well as Al-Aghawat Mosque, in addition to 124 heritage houses which has contributed to the revitalization of the city and encouraging families to return. The rehabilitation and recovery work has generated more than 7000 local jobs and numerous capacity-building activities.
25. Recovery projects in historic cities in Yemen have created valuable employment opportunities for young people, and they support essential physical repairs to historic buildings within the Yemeni World Heritage properties that have been damaged by conflict and extreme weather events. UNESCO is also mobilizing its partners to support the recovery of Syria’s cultural heritage including World Heritage cities, by creating opportunities for community participation and improving livelihoods.
26. In Asia and the Pacific, disasters caused by natural hazards have significantly impacted several World Heritage properties in recent years, requiring significant efforts for recovery and reconstruction. Most recently, in late March 2025, severe seismic events impacted heritage structures across Myanmar and northern Thailand, affecting centuries-old temples and pagodas. UNESCO and local authorities are conducting damage assessments to determine the scale of loss and appropriate recovery strategies.
27. In Ukraine, UNESCO has continued to support initial reconstruction efforts in response to the destruction of cultural heritage caused by the ongoing war and, in close cooperation with ICOMOS and ICCROM and with the support of Japan, has invested considerable effort in advanced documentation of World Heritage properties to adequately inform conservation. As part of UNESCO’s Actions and Emergency Assistance Programme for Ukraine, in line with the Vilnius Call for Action on the Recovery of the Culture Sector of Ukraine, UNESCO is supporting the first steps in the reconstruction of cultural heritage damaged by the ongoing war. In Odesa, with support from Italy, UNESCO contributed to the completion of a permanent roof over the area of the Transfiguration Cathedral damaged by a missile attack in July 2023. At the Odesa House of Scientists, located in the ‘The Historic Centre of Odesa’, inscribed in the List of World Heritage in Danger, UNESCO is assisting with the technical documentation for the development of a conservation plan in preparation for priority restoration works. In L’viv, repairs to the basement of the Historic Residential Complex for Teachers of the L’viv Polytechnic – an architectural monument of local importance within the buffer zone of the World Heritage property ‘L’viv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre’ have been completed.
28. While strongly supporting initiatives directed at emergency repair and stabilisation work and associated projects that provide urgent aid to affected communities, it is also important that longer-term recovery plans and major reconstruction projects that extend beyond immediate emergency responses should be prepared. The recently developed ICOMOS/ICCROM Guidance on post-disaster and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction for heritage places of cultural significance and World Heritage cultural properties offers a value-based and people-centred approach that supports the development of such plans. These will need in any case be subject to Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) and review prior to irreversible decisions and project implementation.



## C. Development Pressures

29. Development pressures continue to affect many World Heritage properties. The state of conservation reports for examination by the current Committee session highlight such pressures within properties, in their buffer zones, and in the wider setting that continue to negatively impact, or have the potential to impact, the OUV of the property. Such pressures range from small-scale projects (e.g., minor changes to individual buildings) to unsustainable expansion of tourism infrastructure, or major infrastructure projects (e.g., roads, railways, cable cars, border barriers, dams, power-generating facilities, or mining), and include issues such as urban encroachment, that inadequately consider the attributes conveying property's OUV, its authenticity and integrity in urban planning and development. The impacts of such pressures continue to be direct, indirect or cumulative depending on the type of pressure and its location in relation to the property and the values for which the property was inscribed, and where incremental change can progressively damage or erode attributes that support the OUV. In certain cases, World Heritage inscription itself has generated increased development pressure by creating demand for new tourism facilities and supporting infrastructure. It is essential that tourism related to World Heritage is managed sustainably with full regard to the values for which a property has been inscribed ensuring there is no negative impact on the OUV. It therefore remains essential that development infrastructure is effectively planned and managed to ensure the fundamental protection of the OUV.
30. Particular development pressures arise for World Heritage properties where the implementation of infrastructure projects does not align with the obligations under Articles 4 and 5 of the World Heritage Convention to ensure the conservation of the property's OUV. For example, for cultural properties, ill-suited height and built form controls that do not respect the attributes conveying the OUV, or unsuitable land zoning and uses can all result in inappropriate development. Specifically, it is recalled that certain activities, including extractives (e.g., mining) and dams with large reservoirs, are fundamentally incompatible with World Heritage status. This is reflected in the 'No-go' policy and Decision **37 COM 7** (see section on Corporate Sustainability below), a commitment that should be reflected in legislation and planning processes at local, regional, and national levels.
31. It continues to be observed that existing planning and management procedures and systems for many World Heritage properties do not specifically recognise their World Heritage context as a primary consideration and/or do not include requirements for rigorous impact assessments as part of development approval processes, in compliance with paragraphs 110 and 118bis of the Operational Guidelines. The Committee has previously highlighted the relevance of the [2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape](#) (HUL) for urban World Heritage properties and requested States Parties to fully consider it, inviting States parties to establish governance mechanisms for coordination and coherence with a view to integrating heritage management with urban development plans and processes to address development pressures within such properties, their buffer zones and wider settings. States Parties should be encouraged to ensure that relevant planning statutes and guidelines guide permissible developments to be consistent with the conservation of attributes supporting the OUV, and that local and national planning and approval procedures are consistent with the Operational Guidelines of the Convention. As it had previously (Decision **46 COM 7**), the Committee may again encourage States Parties to use the [UNESCO Urban Heritage Atlas](#), a digital platform and tool that includes mapping on a GIS database enabling site managers, city authorities, and other stakeholders to better understand and manage heritage in urban contexts, as a tool for managing World Heritage properties in urban contexts in line with the HUL Recommendation.

32. The management systems for World Heritage properties, including spatial plans, regulations, management plans, project approval processes, and related procedures also need to align with World Heritage processes, in particular, Paragraph 118bis requiring States Parties to ensure that appropriate impact assessments are carried out for development projects and activities planned for implementation within or around a World Heritage property, and Paragraph 172 for States Parties to inform, as soon as possible and before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, the World Heritage Centre of their intention to undertake major restorations or new constructions which may affect the OUV so that the Committee may assist in seeking appropriate solutions to ensure that the OUV of the property is fully preserved.
33. The increasing application of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context (2022) is contributing to a more rigorous assessment approach and better decision making and is to be further encouraged. However, there continue to be cases where no impact assessment has been completed and/or the World Heritage Centre has not been informed of developments in accordance with Paragraph 172. In other cases, such notifications have only occurred after approvals were granted or construction has commenced or been completed. There are also cases where the impact assessment process has identified important impacts and recommended alternatives or mitigation measures, which have then not been implemented. It is critical that mitigation measures are effectively implemented, monitored and addressed throughout the project lifecycle. In this regard, ongoing capacity-building/coaching support in undertaking impact assessments being provided to States Parties by the Kingdom of the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNESCO, IUCN and NCEA is appreciated.
34. Decision **46 COM 7.2** welcomed the [Guidance for Wind Energy Projects in a World Heritage Context](#), which provides specific guidance for assessment of the impacts of wind energy projects on attributes which support the OUV of World Heritage properties and identifies potential proactive actions to reduce or mitigate such impact. An updated version of this Guidance has been developed by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, with support from the Governments of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Wallonia (Belgium). The update will expand to address the installation of solar energy projects and transmission infrastructure within a World Heritage context.

#### **D. Management Effectiveness**

35. The implementation of an effective management framework for World Heritage properties remains fundamental to ensuring the protection and conservation of OUV. The periodic evaluation and updating of management plans and processes allows authorities to assess management effectiveness and to identify management gaps and priorities, including in relation to changing threats and pressures. Such revisions should be based on a systematic evaluation of the property management system to ensure that management is effective in achieving its primary aim of protecting and maintaining the OUV, and to inform any necessary changes to ongoing management. It is important that management effectiveness is also considered during the preparation of new nominations to the World Heritage List, where regular evaluation and revision processes should be embedded in the management cycle.
36. The [Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0](#) (EOH 2.0), published jointly by UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN, offers a self-assessment methodology for World Heritage properties. It enables the evaluation of the critical elements of the management system, with a primary focus on assessing whether the OUV of the property is being maintained and management objectives are being achieved and can, therefore, support a thorough review of existing management practices and inform the development of new management plans for World Heritage properties.

37. Various other tools and standards remain available to strengthen the capacity of management authorities to review and evaluate the management effectiveness of World Heritage properties, including the IUCN Green List Standard (which aligns with the EOH 2.0), the IUCN World Heritage Outlook, and other Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (PAME) tools.
38. Coherent and coordinated identification and protection of the values and attributes which convey the OUV must be given appropriate priority by all levels of government, in conformity with the obligations of Articles 4 and 5 of the World Heritage Convention. Management systems for World Heritage properties should be integrated into, and consistent with, broader local, regional and national planning, as well as for relevant sectoral or development plans. Management effectiveness assessment processes may diagnose whether these planning mechanisms at urban or territorial levels are appropriately coordinated with World Heritage management systems. The absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation of management effectiveness undermines the ability of authorities to implement strategic planning and decision-making in the World Heritage context resulting for instance in the unsustainable expansion of tourism within or in the vicinity of a property. By contrast, a desirable approach has been observed when land-use plans and zoning regulations in the wider setting have been amended to ensure that new development is compatible with the OUV of the property, which is a positive practice that should be encouraged.
39. Management systems for World Heritage properties should also aim to identify and implement sustainable solutions that ensure the long-term protection and maintenance of OUV including with the implementation of the HUL Recommendation for urban World Heritage properties with a view to integrating heritage management priorities in the urban development plans and processes.
40. Pressures on properties and threats may also arise from the cumulative impact of multiple developments undertaken in the absence of broader strategic planning and evaluation of the potential effects of developments that are— whether individually or cumulatively —incompatible with the World Heritage status. Cumulative pressures include, for example, the expansion of tourism developments within or in the wider setting of properties, as well extractive mining projects. The consideration of cumulative impacts through processes such as Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) is increasingly important, as these lead to the adoption of a strategic planning approach and informed decisions regarding the protection of World Heritage properties.
41. Effective management systems should be based on thorough impact assessments and incorporate planning and approval processes that allow for the rejection of proposed projects likely to cause unacceptable impacts on the OUV of a property. Continuous capacity-building for planning agencies and heritage managers must be provided to ensure the effective integration of planning and approval processes. (See also section on Development Pressures above)
42. The [World Heritage Online Map Platform](#) (WHOMP) is an online GIS tool for monitoring World Heritage sites, linked to UNESCO databases and developed with support from the Flanders/UNESCO Trust Fund. It displays georeferenced boundaries of World Heritage sites and their buffer zones, based on data from States Parties and aligned with Committee decisions and supports the monitoring and management of these properties and facilitates through informed decision-making.
43. Diverse case studies that promote integrated and inclusive management practices in different World Heritage properties are continuously being updated on both the UNESCO [World Heritage Canopy](#) digital platform, coordinated by the World Heritage Centre for local solutions advancing sustainable development and climate resilience, and the [Nature-Culture Community of PANORAMA Solutions for a healthy planet](#) platform, coordinated by IUCN, ICCROM and ICOMOS.

## E. Climate Change

44. 2024 was the warmest year on record globally, going back to 1850, and the first calendar year to record more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level<sup>4</sup> resulting in worsening climate impacts. This concerning trend is exacerbating disruption and delay with actions that support sustainable development and climate resilience. Climate change remains one of the most significant threats to World Heritage properties, adversely impacting multiple attributes which convey their OUV, as well as the economic and social development and quality of life of related communities. As the climate crisis intensifies, so does the growing spread of climate impacts on cultural and natural heritage. While rapid onset events such as fires, floods, storm surges, cyclones, hurricanes, torrential rains and droughts are increasingly common and visible, slow onset events such as rising sea levels, glacial retreat, ocean acidification, and desertification also cause major impact to World Heritage properties and communities.
45. Several natural properties were affected by severe climate-related events in 2024. Devastating fires in natural World Heritage properties driven by the exceptionally dry, hot and windy conditions, coupled with drought. Severe wildfires were exacerbated by extreme climate conditions and even where the core habitats remain intact, the scale of the destruction has prompted assessment of the damage to guide restoration efforts. Rising ocean water temperatures has led to coral bleaching yet again. Fluctuating and extreme weather events in the last year have included for instance, unpredictable and heavy rainfall that has continued led to impact cultural and natural heritage and for cultural properties, climate-induced changing vegetation types exacerbates the scarcity of traditional construction material. Rising sea levels also pose an increasing threat to coastal properties, in particular for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). An increase in the frequency of cyclones in January and March 2025 has had adverse impacts on the built environment of coastal settlements and their properties. Sudden events, such as a glacial lake outburst floods, devastated settlements of local communities, causing widespread destruction. Such losses extend beyond physical structures, threatening the community's cultural fabric by displacing families and dismantling spaces vital for passing down local and indigenous communities' traditions and knowledge systems. These events, which are happening with increased frequency and intensity, impact World Heritage including the rich ecosystems and biodiversity of natural properties, and both the fragile fabric and authenticity, but also associated cultural practices, of cultural properties. These growing impacts highlight the need for risk management planning addressing both disasters and climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation measures.
46. About a quarter of the State of conservation reports in 2024 and 2025 report issues on climate change and climate-related hazards, such as wildfires, droughts, and floods. The impacts are being experienced globally, and the hazards are only expected to multiply and become more intense. For example, a collaborative study published by UNESCO of 114 UNESCO World Heritage cities in the Mediterranean region finds that urban World Heritage properties in the Mediterranean region currently face significant climate hazards including extreme temperature fluctuations and heatwaves, flooding, storms, and droughts, with nearly two thirds of them already experiencing at least one type of climate hazard.<sup>5</sup> The predicted future scenario under the worst-case for 2100 is already being experienced at many World Heritage cities, and predictions are that it will only get worse.

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<sup>4</sup> Global Climate Highlights Report 2024 from the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) implemented by [ECMWF](#).

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO, the Group on Earth Observation (GEO), and the Greek GEO Office, *Climate Change in Mediterranean World Heritage Cities*, Paris: UNESCO, 2025 (forthcoming); see <https://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1806/>

Sea-level rise will additionally impact all coastal World Heritage urban areas in the region. The report also highlights the potential of urban heritage to enhance resilience and reduce vulnerability including through the integration of heritage in urban planning and adaptation plans.

47. Responding to the climate risks on World Heritage requires a wide range of actions, from implementation of the UNESCO 2023 Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage (Policy Document) adopted by the General Assembly of States Parties to the 1972 Convention, as well as customised local strategies. The Policy Document provides an outcome-oriented framework for goals and targets at national and heritage site levels to galvanize urgent action, including the updating of national heritage management tools and action plans, integrating adaptation and mitigation strategies, and facilitating continuous monitoring and assessment.
48. Site managers, as well as local, regional, and national authorities should be encouraged to assess and monitor climate impacts on their properties in line with the Policy Document and to ensure that the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions effectively reflect the practices and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities associated with the property. Authorities at all levels should be called on to integrate World Heritage properties into plans, policies, and actions to avert, minimize, and address loss and damage due to climate change and related disasters (also see Section IV of Document WHC/25/47.COM/5D).

## **F. Corporate sustainability**

49. Although The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies reported to the Committee at its extended 44th ([WHC/21/44.COM/7](#)) and extended 45th ([WHC/23/45.COM/7](#)) sessions on the 'no-go' commitment of companies to prevent the impacts of harmful large-scale development initiatives on World Heritage, which complement the below update. The corporate sector remains a key stakeholder group in the conservation of World Heritage, and an increasing number of companies and organisations are working to ensure that their operations and investment decisions do not harm World Heritage, often reflected in their sustainability policies and strategies.
50. In 2022, UNESCO [established](#) a set of seven criteria to benchmark corporate sustainability in the World Heritage context, broadening the commitment from the 'no-go' of the extractive sector to wider safeguard policies, now encompassing the financial, hydropower, sports and other sectors. Companies operating in environmentally and culturally sensitive areas should apply these and other global environmental, social and governance standards, such as the respect for human rights. For example, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework puts greater focus on corporate action and includes a specific target for companies and financial institutions to assess and disclose nature-related risks, impacts and dependencies.
51. Reports on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties indicate a growing number of development projects with potential impacts on the OUV of properties that need to be assessed through an impact assessment. The project proponents and the impact assessment practitioners undertaking the impact assessment need access to and capacity to use World Heritage relevant resources, including the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and therefore require special attention in capacity building initiatives.
52. Thanks to financial support from the Government of Flanders (Belgium), the World Heritage Centre is continuing its work on corporate sustainability (see <https://whc.unesco.org/en/no-go-commitment/>). To date, UNESCO has identified more than 2,000 companies, including major development banks, that have endorsed policies and strategies to protect World Heritage. To help guide sustainable investment decisions, UNESCO is working with WWF and a group of investors (Newton Investment



Management, Rathbones and the Church of England Pensions Board) to assess the presence of extractive assets (claims, concessions and projects for mining, oil and gas) in World Heritage properties. The preliminary results of the study show that the presence of extractive assets in World Heritage properties remains high, with over a third of natural properties overlapping with extractive assets. In addition, one sixth of cultural properties are identified as being within half a kilometre of at least one extractive asset. The study shows that the World Heritage ‘no-go’ commitment for the extractive sector, first adopted by the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) in 2003, remains critical as it provides clear assurance that a company will not invest in or undertake harmful projects within World Heritage properties or at sites where they may adversely affect properties. This is in line with Committee’s past requests and established position that extractive activities are incompatible with the World Heritage status (e.g., Decision **37 COM 7**).

53. In October 2023, WRC Promoter, the company responsible for the organisation of the International Automobile Federation (FIA) World Rally Championship (WRC) and European Rally Championship (ERC) [announced](#) a commitment to safeguard natural and mixed World Heritage properties, making it the first-ever motorsport organization to pledge its support to World Heritage. This was followed by a launch and testing of a Natural and Cultural Heritage Management Manual (NACUMA), guided by the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, to assess and guide future activities. IUCN co-leads the [Sports for Nature](#) initiative to engage the sports sector and organisations to champion nature and contribute to its protection and restoration.

## **G. Invasive Alien Species**

54. With Invasive Alien Species (IAS) continue to pose considerable threats to World Heritage properties globally and their impacts are expected to be compounded by climate change, and other drivers that reduce the resilience of habitats. The number of natural World Heritage properties reporting IAS as a factor through the state of conservation reports is increasing and persisting, with 35% of state of conservation reports presented in 2024 on natural and mixed properties showing IAS as a factor. This does not account for IAS in all other properties where the state of conservation was not reported in this year, noting that the 2020 IUCN World Heritage Outlook highlighted IAS as one of the top three current threats and top five potential threats to natural World Heritage, and estimated that almost half of natural World Heritage properties are threatened by IAS.
55. The Committee previously noted with concern the continued threat posed by IAS on natural World Heritage properties and the number of properties significantly affected and strongly encouraged States Parties to develop adequately resourced IAS strategies that emphasize prevention and early warning (Decisions **41 COM 7**, **42 COM 7**), which continue to be required as part of a long-term effort. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognises IAS as a main driver of biodiversity loss globally, also severely affecting health and economy, and the 2023 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) ‘Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and Their Control’ found that IAS cause dramatic, and in some cases irreversible, changes to biodiversity and ecosystems. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted in 2022, includes a target focussed on IAS (Target 6), which calls for efforts to eradicate or control IAS in “priority sites”. States Parties should therefore be encouraged to consider World Heritage as part of their national strategies towards achieving the GBF Targets.
56. In this regard, in 2024 the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with IUCN and the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on IAS developed a toolkit to assist CBD Parties in the strategic development of actions for the implementation of Target 6, and additional guidance on the identification of priority sites (<https://www.cbd.int/invasive/cbdtoolkit>).

#### IV. DRAFT DECISION

##### **Draft Decision: 47 COM 7**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **42 COM 7**, **43 COM 7.2**, **44 COM 7.2**, **45 COM 7.1**, **45 COM 7.2**, and **46 COM 7** adopted at its 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021), extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,*
3. *Also recalling that all proposed major interventions in and around World Heritage properties should be subject to rigorous impact assessments, as outlined in Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines, and in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context; and that both the proposals and the impact assessment-related documentation be submitted, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, before any interventions for new construction, demolition, modification, recovery or reconstruction commences or decisions made that cannot be reversed;*

##### **Follow-up to the 2019 evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process**

4. *Welcomes the detailed Implementation Plan developed by the World Heritage Centre in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, which provides a clear framework to ensure the implementation of the priority recommendations of the 2019 evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process and to report back to the Committee on their implementation;*
5. *Taking note with appreciation of the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations, expresses its gratitude to all the stakeholders of the Convention who have actively contributed to such progress and requests them to continue with the implementation of the recommendations at their level as soon as possible;*
6. *Also requests the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, and in line with Recommendation 34 of the evaluation, to present a progress report on the achievements of the Implementation Plan, for examination at its 49th session;*

##### **Emergency situations resulting from conflicts**

7. *Regrets the loss of human life and the deterioration of humanitarian conditions resulting from conflicts (including armed conflicts and civil unrest) in and around World Heritage properties, while expressing its deepest concern that these conflicts continue to constitute a major threat to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage properties and a major reason for the inscription of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger;*
8. *Welcomes the protection and conservation efforts being undertaken by States Parties for World Heritage properties in current and former conflict zones, including the remote development of corrective measures and the progress made in defining the Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;*
9. *Urges again all parties associated with conflicts to ensure the protection of cultural and natural heritage and to avoid their use for military purposes, and calls upon all States Parties to cooperate in combating the illicit trafficking of cultural objects resulting from*

armed conflicts, including through the ratification of the 1970 Convention and the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols, and the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 (2015), 2253 (2015) and 2347 (2017), as well as the implementation of the UNESCO Recommendations on Museums and Collections (2015);

10. Also welcomes the continued work of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in responding to emergencies and conflicts threatening cultural and natural World Heritage properties and their OUV, including through the World Heritage Fund, the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund and the Rapid Response Facility;

### **Recovery and Reconstruction**

11. Welcomes the continued efforts of States Parties and the international community to respond to post-conflict and post-disaster recovery, as well as their positive social and community linkages, and thanks UNESCO, the Advisory Bodies and all the partners for their generous support of the initiatives and efforts;
12. Recalls that reconstruction is only justified in exceptional circumstances and should be based on thorough documentation, guided by conservation plans and policies that support the OUV and as outlined in Paragraph 86 of the Operational Guidelines;
13. Expresses its deep condolences to the people affected by disasters over the past year and the resulting loss of lives, in addition to serious damage to heritage sites, calls on the international community to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of protective and/or repair measures that may be required to respond to the impact of the earthquake damage;
14. Reiterates its previous encouragement to all States Parties to prepare comprehensive risk preparedness strategies and emergency response plans for World Heritage properties at risk from armed conflict and/or disasters resulting from natural causes;
15. Emphasises that Recovery Plans and major reconstruction projects which extend beyond emergency repair and stabilisation work should be subject to Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) prepared in conformity with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines and in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in the World Heritage Context.

### **Development pressures**

16. Reiterates its concern regarding the continued and increasing pressures on World Heritage arising from a wide range of development pressures from small scale housing projects to large scale infrastructure development, including for transport and energy, urban development and expansion, mining and extraction, and the building of border barriers, to the development of tourism infrastructure within World Heritage properties or in their wider setting, resulting in significant potential and ascertained threats to the OUV of these properties;
17. Requests States Parties to ensure that their obligations under Articles 4 and 5 of the World Heritage Convention are appropriately reflected in legislative, governance and management systems for World Heritage properties, to ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to the protection of OUV across all levels of government;
18. Reiterates its encouragement to States Parties to implement the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) to further the protection of the OUV of urban World Heritage properties, and also to use the UNESCO Urban Heritage Atlas digital tool and platform towards this;
19. Reminds States Parties that, to support effective planning and decision-making, the potential impacts of proposed developments on the OUV of World Heritage properties



must be thoroughly assessed in accordance with paragraphs 110 and 118bis of the Operational Guidelines and based on the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and that both development proposals and their impact assessment documentation should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre prior to decisions that would be difficult to reverse, as stipulated in Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, emphasizing that developments that will negatively impact the OUV should not be permitted to proceed, and recalling that, for any project that is considered appropriate to proceed in a World Heritage context, the findings of impact assessment reports, including project alternatives and mitigation measures, are implemented and monitored throughout the project lifecycle;

20. Welcomes the forthcoming updated Guidance for Wind and Solar Energy Projects in a World Heritage Context, and invites States Parties to make use of it and to refer proponents of renewable energy projects to it to ensure alignment with World Heritage protection requirements;
21. Appreciates ongoing capacity-building/coaching support being provided to States Parties by the Kingdom of the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) in undertaking impact assessments in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNESCO, IUCN and NCEA;

### **Management Effectiveness**

22. Invites States Parties to implement best-practice management approaches that include periodic monitoring and evaluation of World Heritage management systems to ensure effective protection and maintenance of the OUV, and to utilise the 2023 Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0 and other relevant tools, to inform adaptive management approaches;
23. Notes the critical importance of clearly established legislation and governance arrangements for the protection of the OUV of World Heritage properties and recalls that effective management systems for World Heritage properties, including HIA mechanisms, should be integrated into local, regional, and national planning processes to ensure coherent and coordinated protection of the OUV at all levels of government, emphasizing the importance of sustainable solutions that ensure the long-term protection and maintenance of OUV including with the implementation of the HUL Recommendation for urban World Heritage properties;
24. Also recalls that the preparation of new nomination dossiers for the World Heritage List should ensure that management systems for potential properties include provisions for monitoring and evaluating management effectiveness, as well as robust impact assessment processes;
25. Further recalls the availability of information systems supporting effective management, including the World Heritage Online Map Platform, alongside the importance of sharing best practices through the UNESCO World Heritage Canopy platform and the IUCN-ICCROM-ICOMOS Nature Culture Community of PANORAMA and invites States Parties to continue contributing to these platforms and to share effective management practices;

### **Climate Change**

26. Notes with concern that World Heritage properties continue to increasingly face impacts of climate change, including extreme temperature fluctuations and heatwaves, wildfires, flooding, glacier retreat, storms, droughts, desertification and sea-level rise; and also notes the publication 'Climate Change in Mediterranean World Heritage Cities' and its finding that the predicted future scenario under the worst-case for 2100 is already being experienced at many urban World Heritage properties with predictions only likely to further increase in intensity and frequency and highlights the potential of urban heritage to enhance resilience;

27. Urges States Parties to implement the 2023 Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage (Policy Document) and encourages again the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage-related Category 2 Centres to disseminate it widely through appropriate means;
28. Also encourages national, sub-national, local, and site authorities to assess and monitor climate impacts on their properties in line with the Policy Document, and to ensure that the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions effectively reflects relevant practices and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities associated with the property;
29. Calls on national, sub-national, local, and site authorities to integrate World Heritage properties into plans, policies, and actions to avert, minimize, and address loss and damage due to climate change and related disasters;

### **Corporate sustainability**

30. Welcomes the growing efforts of the corporate sector and the development banks to integrate World Heritage safeguards into their sustainability policies and strategies, and invites all relevant private and public sector companies to follow the example, and to submit their adopted policies to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre;
31. Reiterates its request to the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, to continue to work with the corporate sector to support the adoption and implementation of World Heritage safeguards policies;
32. Notes with serious concern the reported high presence of extractive assets, including claims, concessions and projects for mining, oil and gas in natural World Heritage properties, and recalls that the activities of the extractive sector are considered incompatible with the World Heritage status;
33. Urges all States Parties to the Convention, as well as industry players and their investors and assurers, to respect the World Heritage ‘no-go’ commitment by not authorising and not pursuing activities of the extractives sector within World Heritage properties, and ensuring that activities that are conducted outside properties are subject to appropriate impact assessments, conducted in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and avoid all harm on World Heritage;

### **Invasive Alien Species**

34. Continues to note with concern the threat posed by invasive alien species (IAS) to natural World Heritage properties and the number of properties significantly affected by IAS;
35. Urges States Parties to develop adequately-resourced IAS strategies and action plans that emphasise prevention, early warning and rapid response in World Heritage properties, and encourages States Parties to utilise the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) IAS Toolkit for Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework(GBF), produced in collaboration with IUCN; also encouraging States Parties to consider World Heritage as part of their national strategies towards achieving Target 6 of the GBF;
36. Strongly encourages again States Parties to incorporate IAS response strategies into climate change mitigation policies and actions for World Heritage properties.