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WHC-99/CONF.206/INF.4

Paris, 20 July 1999

Original : English/French

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

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

**Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room II  
28 - 29 October 1999**

Summary record of the Eleventh General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention  
Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage  
(UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 27 – 28 October 1997)

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

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

**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 27-28 October 1997  
Room II**

**SUMMARY RECORD**

1. The eleventh General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was held in Paris at UNESCO Headquarters on 27 and 28 October 1997, during the twenty-ninth session of the General Conference.
2. One hundred and twenty-eight States Parties to the Convention were represented at this meeting.
3. The representatives of the three advisory bodies to the World Heritage Convention (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN), the Council of Europe, three non-governmental organizations, as well as one State not party to the Convention attended the meeting as observers.
4. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre provided the Secretariat for the Assembly.

**Opening of the session**

5. In her opening address, the representative of the Director-General, Mrs Lourdes Arizpe, Assistant Director-General for Culture, spoke of the remarkable and visionary character of the Convention for the Protection of World Heritage, which was adopted exactly twenty-five years ago. The Convention is based on the by now well-accepted premises that there are natural and cultural properties of such importance that not only are they of national value, but also of universal value to all humankind. She welcomed the adhesion of new States Parties to the Convention and mentioned the most recent ones: Suriname, Papua New Guinea and South Africa.

6. She recalled that the Director-General, in view of the global nature of the Convention, had created five years ago, the World Heritage Centre to assist States Parties. For its part, the World Heritage Centre may count upon assistance from the Science, Culture and Education Sectors, as well as on the advisory bodies to the Committee, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN.

7. The representative of the Director-General referred to the decision of the World Heritage Committee for an audit after these five years which would provide the basis to study and improve the implementation of the Convention.

8. She then emphasized the importance of item 8 of the provisional agenda concerning the monitoring and reporting on the state of conservation of World Heritage sites. Furthermore, she referred to emergency situations being faced at the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi (Italy) and the fires spreading throughout Indonesia.

### **Election of the President of the General Assembly, Vice-Presidents and Rapporteur**

9. The General Assembly elected by acclamation H.E. Mr Nouréini Tidjani-Serpos (Benin) as President of the General Assembly, the representatives of Australia, Morocco and the United States of America as Vice Presidents, and Mr Mauricio Montalvo (Ecuador) as Rapporteur.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

10. The agenda was adopted without amendments.

### **Report by the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee for the period 1996-1997**

11. The Chairperson, Mrs Teresa Franco, recalled the last sessions of the World Heritage Committee which were held in Berlin (Germany - nineteenth session) and Merida (Mexico - twentieth session). During these sessions, the World Heritage Committee decided to include 66 new properties on the World Heritage List, bringing the total to 506, with 380 cultural, 108 natural and 19 mixed properties.

12. After a quarter of a century of implementation, it appears that the 1972 Convention is one of the most successful instruments in the field of heritage protection. The Chairperson recalled the efforts undertaken by the World Heritage Committee to ensure that properties correspond to evaluation criteria, and then spoke of the low number of natural properties listed and proposed for inscription. She underlined the imbalance between the number of sites proposed and listed in Europe in comparison to the number of sites from other regions of the world.

13. In this respect, she mentioned assistance approved by the Committee for emergency requests. The budgetary allocation has been considerably increased: from US\$ 150,000 per year in 1994/1995 for preparatory assistance, it was increased to

US\$ 175,000 in 1996 and to US\$ 300,000 in 1997. The amount approved for training activities increased from US\$ 440,000 to US\$ 452,000 in 1994/1995, to US\$ 550,000 in 1996 and to US\$ 745,000 in 1997.

14. She expressed concern about the low number of requests for international assistance, especially in the field of preparatory assistance, probably due to the lack of knowledge regarding procedures to follow to apply for this assistance.

15. She indicated that during its forthcoming session in Naples, the Committee would be able to examine the Auditor's report on the management of the Convention, thus providing a basis for future planning of the work of the Convention.

16. The President of the General Assembly once again expressed his satisfaction with the work accomplished.

#### **Examination of the Statement of Accounts of the World Heritage Fund**

17. The General Assembly took note of the Document WHC-97/CONF.205/3A concerning the examination of the statement of accounts of the World Heritage Fund for the financial period 1994/1995, as well as the accounts audited by the Auditor General for 1996. The representative of the Bureau of the Comptroller proposed that the General Assembly accept the accounts for 1994, 1995 and 1996.

18. The Delegate of Thailand wished to know why, according to the letter from the Auditor General of Canada, the accounts for the preceding years had not been audited, whereas all the financial statements should have been, including the Special Fund for 1995 and 1996. The representative of the Bureau of the Comptroller replied that the vocation of an audit is to provide an overall opinion on the accounts as a whole, based on the examination of a certain number.

#### **State of Contributions by States Parties**

19. The representative of the Bureau of the Comptroller indicated that a large number of States Parties had paid their contributions and that other contributions were being made and would be accepted until midday.

20. The Delegate of China voiced his disappointment that the amount of US\$ 20,000 contributed by his country was not indicated as a voluntary contribution in the document. The representative of the Bureau of the Comptroller said that he would verify this information and that the necessary corrections would be made.

#### **Determination of the amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 of the Convention**

21. In accordance with item 7 of the agenda, the General Assembly unanimously decided that the amount of mandatory contributions to the World Heritage Fund for the period 1998-1999, calculated in US dollars, would be maintained at 1 percent of contributions made by States Parties to the Regular Programme of UNESCO, in accordance with Article 16, paragraph 1 of the Convention, as had been decided by previous General Assemblies.

### **Monitoring and reporting the state of conservation of World Heritage properties**

22. The Director of the World Heritage Centre recalled that the Tenth General Assembly examined the monitoring and reporting on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties and that it decided the following (paragraph 31 of the Summary Record of the Tenth General Assembly):

'As a conclusion, the General Assembly decided to continue the debate on the systematic monitoring and reporting on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties at the Eleventh General Assembly of States Parties that will be held in 1997. The General Assembly requested the World Heritage Committee to prepare a report and a draft resolution for the Eleventh session of the General Assembly of States Parties taking into account the discussions and experiences gained over the past years as well as the documents that had been presented to the Tenth General Assembly and the discussions thereon.'

23. In response to this request, the World Heritage Committee submitted working document WHC-97/CONF.205/5 which included a report and a draft resolution. The Committee proposed in its report that the methodology and procedures of monitoring and reporting should be governed by the following principles:

- i) monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage properties is the responsibility of the State Party concerned and is part of the site management;
- ii) the commitment of the States Parties to provide regular reports on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties is consistent with the principles of the World Heritage Convention and should be part of a continuous process of collaboration between the States Parties and the World Heritage Committee;
- iii) regular reports may be submitted in accordance with Article 29 of the Convention. The General Conference of UNESCO should be asked to activate Article 29 of the Convention and to entrust the World Heritage Committee with the responsibility to respond to these reports;
- iv) the World Heritage Committee should define the form, nature and extent of the regular reporting in respect of the principles of State sovereignty.

24. After long discussion and taking into account interventions of several States Parties, the General Assembly adopted, by consensus, the following resolution.

1. Noting that the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage has recognized that the cultural and natural heritage 'are increasingly threatened with destruction, not only by traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction';

2. Considering the twenty-five years of experience in the implementation of the Convention;
3. Reaffirms that 'deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world';
4. While reaffirming the sovereign right of the State Party concerned over the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, considers that a well-reflected and formulated common policy for the protection of cultural and natural heritage is likely to create a continuing interaction between States Parties;
5. Emphasizes the interest of each State Party to be informed of the experience of others with regard to conservation methods and the possibilities so offered, through voluntary international co-operation, for the general improvement of all actions undertaken;
6. Reaffirms the standard setting role of the General Assembly as well as of the World Heritage Committee;
7. Concludes that monitoring is the responsibility of the State Party concerned and that the commitment to provide periodic reports on the state of the site is consistent with the principles set out in the Convention in
  - (i) the first, second, sixth, seventh and eighth preambular clauses,
  - (ii) Art. 4
  - (iii) Art. 6.1. and 6.2.
  - (iv) Art. 7
  - (v) Art. 10
  - (vi) Art. 11
  - (vii) Art. 13
  - (viii) Art. 15
  - (ix) Art. 21.3
  - (x) Art. 29;
8. Emphasizes that monitoring is part of the site management which remains the responsibility of the States Parties where the site is located, and that periodic reports may be submitted in accordance with Article 29 of the Convention;
9. Recalls that Article 4 of the Convention provides that 'Each State Party....recognizes that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage...situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that State';

10. Recalls that Article 6 lays down the concept of world heritage 'for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate', and that Article 7 requires the establishment of a 'system of international co-operation and assistance' designed to support States Parties' efforts to identify and conserve that heritage;
11. Emphasizes that periodic reporting should be an integral part of a consultative process and not treated as a sanction or a coercive mechanism;
12. Notes that within the broad responsibility of the World Heritage Committee in standards setting, the form, nature and extent of the periodic reporting must respect the principles of State sovereignty and that the involvement of the Committee, through its Secretariat and/or advisory bodies, in the preparation of the periodic reports would be with the agreement of the State Party concerned;
13. Further notes that the States Parties may request expert advice from the Secretariat and/or the advisory bodies and that the Secretariat may also commission expert advice with the agreement of the States Parties;
14. Suggests the General Conference of UNESCO to activate the procedures in Art. 29 of the Convention and to refer to the World Heritage Committee the responsibility to respond to the reports;
15. Encourages States Parties to take advantage of shared information and experience on World Heritage matters;
16. Invites other States to become States Parties to the Convention.

25. The General Assembly requested the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee to transmit to the General Conference of UNESCO its views on monitoring and reporting, as well as its suggestion to the General Conference to activate the procedures in Art. 29 of the Convention and to refer to the World Heritage Committee the responsibility to respond to the reports.

### **Elections to the World Heritage Committee**

26. Under item 9 of the agenda, the General Assembly was called upon to elect seven members of the World Heritage Committee, to replace the following seven members whose mandate would expire at the end of the 29th session of the General Conference: China, Cyprus, Egypt, Germany, Mexico, Philippines and Spain. The list of candidates was read out to the General Assembly: Angola, Armenia, Bulgaria, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Vietnam, Yemen and Zimbabwe. Spain announced the withdrawal of its candidature and requested that their votes should go to Portugal. The Legal Adviser read out the voting procedures for the secret ballot and the President decided upon a secret ballot, in accordance with Article 13.1 of the

Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. The Director of the World Heritage Centre recalled that Article 8 of the Convention provides that election of members of the Committee shall ensure an equitable representation of the different regions of the world. He noted that Group II was not represented.

27. The results of the first ballot were as follows:

Number of States Parties eligible to vote:	151
Number of voters:	119
Number of abstentions and invalid papers:	1
Majority required:	60

Greece (53 votes); Finland (47); Mexico (40); Portugal (39); Thailand (38); Zimbabwe (36); China (35); Panama (35); Saudi Arabia (34); Egypt (33); Republic of Korea (31); Hungary (30); Tunisia (24); Costa Rica (22); Mali (22); Switzerland (22); Czech Republic (19); Pakistan (18); Vietnam (18); Poland (17); Turkey (17); Bulgaria (15); Guatemala (13); Malawi (13); Yemen (13); Angola (12); Mozambique (11); Guinea (10); Armenia (9); Ghana (9); Slovak Republic (8); Romania (6); Croatia (5).

28. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the second ballot was to be limited to those States having obtained the greatest number of votes, provided that the number of States did not exceed twice the number of seats remaining to be filled, which was fourteen. After discussion, the General Assembly decided to increase this number to sixteen, as Costa Rica, Mali and Switzerland had obtained the same number of votes (22).

The results of the second ballot were as follows:

Number of voters:	128
Abstentions:	0
Invalid papers:	1
Majority required:	64

Greece (82); Zimbabwe (74); Finland (61); Thailand (54); Portugal (52); Hungary (51); Egypt (50); Mexico (49); Republic of Korea (48); Saudi Arabia (45); China (44); Panama (40); Mali (35); Switzerland (35); Costa Rica (33); Tunisia (33).

The President of the General Assembly declared Greece and Zimbabwe as elected.

29. Five seats remained to be filled and a third ballot was organized with twice the number of candidate States, ten. The results of the third ballot were as follows:

Number of voters:	124
Majority required:	62
Abstentions:	0
Invalid papers:	2

Finland (61); Hungary (60); Egypt (60); Republic of Korea (55); Mexico (54); Saudi Arabia (53); Portugal (52); China (52); Thailand (49); Panama (35).

No country was elected.

30. The Delegate of Panama announced the withdrawal of his country's candidature and requested that their votes go to Mexico. The Delegate of Mexico thanked Panama. The Delegate of the Republic of Korea indicated that he wished the names of the States candidates for election to be announced orally, in order to note the position of the Republic of Korea as fourth on the list. Although already indicated on the blackboard, the Director of the World Heritage Centre announced the list of States concerned by the last ballot. The President of the General Assembly then recalled on the one hand that the delegates should encircle five countries from the nine on the voting papers, and on the other, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, only a simple majority was required in the fourth ballot.

The results of the fourth ballot were as follows:

Number of voters:	128
Abstentions:	0
Invalid papers:	0
Elected:	

Finland (71); Hungary (63); Mexico (61); Republic of Korea (60); Thailand (54); Egypt (51); Saudi Arabia (49); Portugal (48); China (43).

The President of the General Assembly declared as elected the following States: Finland, Hungary, Mexico, Republic of Korea and Thailand.

31. The Delegates of the seven elected countries thanked those countries who voted in their favour and promised to work for the World Heritage Convention.

32. The President of the General Assembly then announced the names of the new members of the Committee (Finland, Greece, Hungary, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Zimbabwe) as well as the composition of the new World Heritage Committee.

### **Other business (item 10)**

33. The Delegate of Panama informed of his wish to associate States not yet party to the Convention with the 152 States Parties, in a reflection on the protection of the World Heritage, and he suggested that the number of members of the World Heritage Committee be increased to enable greater participation in the work of the Committee. The Delegate of Italy wished to go back to item 6 of the agenda in Document WHC-97/CONF.205/3A concerning the approbation of the utilization of the World Heritage Fund, item 12 of page 21. She indicated that contrary to what was mentioned in the report, it is not the Fund which finances staff costs, but the Regular Programme. She therefore wished that the text of this item be modified in conformity with what was approved by the 28th session of the General Conference. The Delegate of France supported these remarks. It was finally decided that, in the absence of figures, the

paragraph referred to by the Delegate of Italy be suppressed, inasmuch as it does not modify the sense of the text.

34. The Director of the World Heritage Centre indicated that in accordance with a decision taken at the twentieth session of the World Heritage Committee in Merida, Mexico, an extraordinary session of the 21-member World Heritage Committee would be held the day following this General Assembly, to elect the seven members of the World Heritage Bureau.

#### **Closure of the session**

35. After having thanked the Secretariat, the tellers and the interpreters for their efficient work, the President declared the session closed.