

MONITORING NATURAL WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

The World Heritage Convention aims to establish "an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods." (Preamble to the Convention). "Each State Party to this Convention recognizes that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage...belongs primarily to that State." (Article 4). Article 5 suggests a number of steps which States should take to ensure appropriate protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated in its territory, including policies, management structures, scientific studies, training, and other measures.

Article 6 recognizes that "such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to cooperate." International protection is defined by Article 7 as "the establishment of a system of international cooperation and assistance designed to support States Parties to the Convention in their efforts to conserve and identify that heritage." Articles 15 to 18 establish a Fund for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and Articles 19 to 26 describe the conditions and arrangements for international assistance. The World Heritage Committee is empowered to "carry out such studies and consultations as it deems necessary" before reaching a decision on any request for technical assistance. Finally, Article 27 states that Parties "shall undertake to keep the public broadly informed of the dangers threatening this heritage and of activities carried on in pursuance of this Convention."

At the Sixth Session of the World Heritage Committee, meeting in Paris on 13 to 17 December 1982, it was considered that it would be useful if the Committee could be regularly informed (a) on the state of conservation of the properties; (b) on the measures taken to protect and manage the properties; (c) on the way in which funds allocated under the World Heritage Fund for the safeguarding of sites are used; and (d) details on the conservation methods and techniques followed in the projects concerned.

It was felt, however, that the question of reporting by States Parties required careful study before the Committee could take any decision on this matter, although the principle of yearly reporting was considered to be highly desirable. The Committee therefore requested IUCN and ICOMOS, in collaboration with ICCROM, to prepare for the next meeting of the Bureau, proposals on the contents of the reports which may be requested from State Parties on World Heritage sites and on the procedure to be followed for the preparation and submission to the Committee of such reports. In this connection, the organizations were requested to take account of the different types of cultural and natural properties in the various regions of the world.

On 12 and 13 April 1983, IUCN and ICOMOS met with the World Heritage

Secretariat at Unesco Headquarters in Paris to discuss the approaches being taken to the request by the Committee. It was felt that because there are many fundamental differences between cultural and natural sites, it would not be feasible to develop a common approach to monitoring of the two major types of World Heritage properties; IUCN and ICOMOS were therefore encouraged to develop separate approaches to monitoring.

## 2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1. Reporting or monitoring? It is important that there be a very clear understanding of what is being attempted. It is proposed that "monitoring" be the objective of this reporting exercise, defined simply as "measurements taken according to a standard methodology over a period of time, so that status and trends may be detected."

It should be noted that appropriate monitoring procedures are standard parts of most international conservation instruments, including the Law of the Sea, the Ramsar Wetlands Convention, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, and the Migratory Species Convention.

2.2. Guidelines. The monitoring system should provide the information which will lead to the improved management of World Heritage properties. The following are several guidelines to ensure that the monitoring system will provide the information required by both the national Management Authority and the World Heritage Committee, while ensuring that questions of national sovereignty are not at issue, and that no inappropriate burden is placed on State Parties.

2.2.1. The monitoring system should be primarily self-monitoring, whereby States report annually on their own sites; comparisons are most appropriate when made between over time for the same site, or between planned and actual achievement for the site.

2.2.2. The reports should be summarized by IUCN for presentation to the Committee.

2.2.3. The reports should be used primarily for information, including for the public; the Committee should also use the reports as a basis for assessing Technical Cooperation requests, or applications for consideration for the World Heritage in Danger list.

2.2.4. In the long run, the annual reports could provide an important source of information to all State Parties on the effective management of World Heritage Properties.

2.2.5. The reports should be made annually, but should not place an undue burden on the State Party; the reports should therefore be simple, but with ample scope for additional voluntary information.

2.2.6. IUCN and the World Heritage Secretariat should provide whatever assistance may be required to fill out the reports for the first year; it is expected that the subsequent annual up-dating would be a relatively simple and straight-forward task requiring about one hour per World Heritage Property (provided the Responsible Authority collects the necessary information on a regular basis).

2.2.7. The reports should be part of an international system which provides support to the management authorities for properties of particular conservation significance; this system should ultimately expand beyond the resources available through the World Heritage Fund.

### 3. CONTENTS OF ANNUAL REPORTS

3.1. The World Heritage Secretariat should send out a form, designed in cooperation with IUCN, to the Responsible Authority for each natural World Heritage Property. The form should be relatively simple, with yes or no answers wherever possible. The form should contain at least the following:

1. State Party:
2. Name of World Heritage Property:
3. Date added to the World Heritage List:
4. Responsible Authority:
5. Technical cooperation requested:
  - Amount:
  - Date:
  - Description:
  - Results:
  - Follow-up:
6. Number of visitors for the year:
  - 6a. Percent change from previous year:
7. Budget for the year:
  - 7a. Percent change in budget from previous year:
8. Does the site have a management plan? Yes No
  - 8a. If no, is a plan in preparation?
  - 8b. If yes, when was the management plan prepared?
  - 8c. What period does the management plan cover?
  - 8d. What is the status of implementation of the management plan?
9. What objectives are described for the site?
10. What special management steps are prescribed in recognition of the World Heritage status of the site?
11. How many people were employed at the site during this year?
  - 11a. Percent change from previous year:
  - 11b. How many personnel are from each of the follows levels:
    - Professional/Technical:
    - Maintenance:
    - Protection:
    - Other:
12. Describe any training programmes which were carried out this year.
13. Describe any special education/public information programmes.
14. Describe any research which was carried out in the site during this year.
  - 14a. What research is planned for the coming year?
15. What major publications were issued about the site this year (either by the Management Authority, by researchers, or by private individuals)?
16. What threats does the site face?
  - 16a. What is being done to counteract these threats?
17. What technical assistance was provided to the site during this year?
18. What technical assistance is necessary for the coming year?

### 4. HANDLING THE DATA COLLECTED

IUCN -- in cooperation with UNEP, Unesco, and the World Wildlife Fund -- has

established the Protected Areas Data Unit as part of its Conservation Monitoring Centre; this Unit is compiling information on all protected areas, including World Heritage Sites. Data categories include name of the area, management category, biogeographic province, legal protection, date established, geographical location, altitude, area, land tenure, physical features, vegetation, noteworthy fauna, zoning, disturbances and deficiencies, scientific research, special scientific facilities, principal reference material, staff, budget, and local administration. Typical data sheets, which form the basis of the monitoring system and are published in directories from time to time, form part of the technical evaluations of natural properties by IUCN.

Such information can help form the basis of the more detailed monitoring system outlined in this paper. It is proposed that the IUCN Protected Area Data Sheet be sent to the Management Authority for each natural World Heritage Property when the Annual Report form described in article 3 (above) is distributed at the beginning of each year. This will enable the Management Authority to have full access to the available information and to make any changes which may be necessary.

The information submitted with the annual report would be processed by IUCN and presented to the World Heritage Committee in summary form, stressing changes -- either positive or negative -- in the status, budget, personnel, training, education, and other significant aspects of the property.

##### 5. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed monitoring programme will underline the importance of natural World Heritage Properties to the international community. It will encourage national Management Authorities to critically evaluate their own management activities, report to the the World Heritage Committee on their accomplishments, and call the attention of the Committee to problems that may require technical assistance from the World Heritage Fund.