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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirtieth Session

Vilnius, Lithuania

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Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: Examination of the State of Conservation of
World Heritage properties

**7.2 Issues related to the state of conservation of World Heritage properties: Strategy
for reducing Risks from Disasters at World Heritage properties**

SUMMARY

As per Decisions **28 COM 10B**, paragraph 3 and **29 COM 7B.b** paragraph 4, this document presents a strategy for reducing risks from disasters at World Heritage properties including a table with prioritized recommended actions as well as, in Point III, proposals for a more effective use of Emergency Assistance funds.

Decision required : The Committee is requested to review this document and consider the draft Decision **30 COM 7.2** for adoption. See Point IV.

I. Introduction to the Strategy for Reducing Risks from Disasters at World Heritage Properties

A. Rational and background to the Strategy

A. 1) Introduction

1. World Heritage properties, as with all heritage properties, are exposed to natural and human-made disasters which threaten their integrity and may compromise their values. The loss or deterioration of these outstanding properties would negatively impact the national and local communities, both for their cultural importance as a source of information on the past and identity, and for their socio-economic value.
2. Risks related to disasters within heritage sites are a function of their vulnerability to different potential hazards. The recent natural disasters in Bam, Iran, or in the Old Fort of Galle in Sri Lanka are high profile examples of the vulnerability of cultural heritage worldwide. Natural heritage can also be threatened, in exceptional circumstances, by natural disasters. Hazards, however, may be also human-made, such as fire, explosions etc. Accidental forest fires, conflicts, massive refugee movements, bursting of tailing pond dams as in Doñana (Spain), are certainly a concern to natural WH sites. If natural disasters are difficult to prevent or control, hazards resulting from human activities can be avoided, and the vulnerability of heritage sites to both natural and human-made disasters can be reduced, thus lowering the overall risk threatening a property.
3. Despite this, most World Heritage properties, particularly in developing areas of the world, do not have any established policy, plan of process for managing risks associated with potential disasters. Existing national and local disaster preparedness mechanisms, moreover, usually do not take into account the significance of these sites and do not include heritage expertise in their operations. At the same time, traditional knowledge and sustainable practices that ensured a certain level of protection from the worst effects of natural hazards or human-made disasters are being progressively abandoned. As a result, hundreds of sites are virtually defenceless with respect to potential disasters.
4. Improving the management of risks for properties inscribed in the World Heritage List, therefore, is necessary to prevent and reduce damage from disasters and to preserve their cultural and natural values, thus protecting an essential support for the social and economic well-being of their communities.

A. 2) Decision by the Committee

5. In 2003, the Committee had requested an independent evaluation on the Emergency Assistance Programme (Decision **27 COM 11.1**) to examine its overall performance and, more specifically, its relevance, efficiency and outcomes during the period 1998-2003. The evaluation was presented to the Committee at its 28th Session in Suzhou (China, July 2004), in Document *WHC.04/28.COM/10B*.

6. During the debate on this item, members of the Committee indicated, among the desirable improvements to Emergency Assistance, a clearer definition of “emergency”, a more rigorous use of resources to address emergency situations strictly relating to the conservation of World Heritage Sites, and a more rapid allocation of funds. In addition, the need for strengthened policies and practices for disaster prevention or mitigation at World Heritage sites was also mentioned.
7. Decision **28 COM 10B** accordingly addresses all these points and, in its paragraph 3, invites “*the World Heritage Centre, in co-operation with the States Parties, Advisory Bodies, and other international agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned by emergency interventions, to prepare a risk-preparedness strategy to be presented to the Committee at its 30th session in 2006*”. The elaboration of a “*strategy for risk-preparedness for the regions most exposed to natural disasters*”, on the other hand, was also proposed in paragraph 45 (h) of the recommendations contained in the evaluation document¹.

A. 3) Current reference to risks and disasters in the *Operational Guidelines*

8. Currently, the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* refer to “risks” in their paragraph 118, stating that: “*The Committee recommends that States Parties include risk preparedness as an element in their World Heritage site management plans and training strategies*”, as well as in section 4b of the new format for the nomination of a property (Annex 5 of the *Operational Guidelines*), that include an item on “Natural disasters and risk preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)”, requesting States Parties to: “*Itemize those disasters which present a foreseeable threat to the property and what steps have been taken to draw up contingency plans for dealing with them, whether by physical protection measures or staff training*”.
9. Paragraphs 161 and 162, moreover, refer to the procedure for Emergency Nominations, reserved for properties that: “*have suffered damage or face serious and specific dangers from natural events or human activities*”, explaining that in such circumstances the Committee might consider inscription on the List of the World Heritage in Danger. Paragraphs 177 to 191, indeed, concern the procedures for the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List in Danger, which the Committee might consider when a site is “*threatened by serious and specific danger*”, which can be ascertained or potential. Among the possible factors that might endanger a property, no explicit reference is made to disasters.
10. However, paragraph 181 clarifies that: “*the factor or factors which are threatening the integrity of the property must be those which are amenable to correction by human action. In the case of cultural properties, both natural factors and man-made factors may be threatening, while in the case of natural properties, most threats will be man-made and only very rarely a natural factor (such as an epidemic disease) will threaten the integrity of the property*”.
11. Currently (March 2006), the large majority of the 34 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger (with the exception of Bam and its Cultural Landscape (Iran), and of the five natural heritage properties in Congo, for

¹ Cf. Document WHC.04/28.COM/10B, page 19

example) were included on this list due to gradual, cumulative effects, i.e. not as a result of disasters.

12. Risks are also mentioned within the format of the questionnaire for the Periodic Reporting exercise, notably in its Section II.5, Factors affecting the property (Annex 7 of the *Operational Guidelines*). Here, States Parties are requested to “comment on the degree to which the property is threatened by particular problems and risks”, including by natural disasters. “Relevant information on operating methods that will make the State Party capable of counteracting dangers that threaten or may endanger its cultural or natural heritage” is also required, including earthquakes, floods, and land-slides.
13. Finally, the *Operational Guidelines* make reference to disasters within their policies for the granting of Emergency Assistance Funds, described in paragraph 241.
14. According to this paragraph: “This assistance may be requested to address ascertained or potential threats facing properties included on the List of World Heritage in Danger and the World Heritage List which have suffered severe damage or are in imminent danger of severe damage due to sudden, unexpected phenomena. Such phenomena may include land subsidence, extensive fires, explosions, flooding or man-made disasters including war. This assistance does not concern cases of damage or deterioration caused by gradual processes of decay, pollution or erosion. It addresses emergency situations strictly relating to the conservation of a World Heritage property (see Decision 28 COM 10B 2.c). It may be made available, if necessary, to more than one World Heritage property in a single State Party (see Decision 6 EXT. COM 15.2). The budget ceilings relate to a single World Heritage property.

The assistance may be requested to:

- (i) undertake emergency measures for the safeguarding of the property;*
- (ii) draw up an emergency plan for the property. ”*

Point III of this document contains a review of these current policies and suggestions for their implementation. Further guidance on the use of Emergency Assistance should be provided in the future in Annex 9 of the *Operational Guidelines* (to be completed), entitled “Evaluation criteria by the Advisory Bodies for International Assistance requests”.

A. 4) Global disaster reduction policies: the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA)

15. Risks from disasters and how to reduce them is a huge field which involves hundreds of organizations and institutions across the world, including a UN Focal Point, i.e. the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), based in Geneva. While heritage (especially cultural) has so far developed its own policies on risk-preparedness in relative isolation, it is essential that any strategic document on disaster risk reduction adopted in the framework of an Intergovernmental Convention take stock of the global context and its terminology, lest procedures for cultural and natural heritage should be cut off

from the mainstream discourse on disaster procedures within the framework of sustainable development.

16. The most recent and important global policy text on risk reduction was adopted at the *UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR)*, held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the tragic earthquake that struck the region in January 1995. Taking place 11 years after the adoption of the seminal *Yokohama Strategy (1994)*, and five years after the end of the *UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR, 1990-1999)*, the Conference resulted in the approval of a very important document called the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* (also known as HFA)².
17. The recommendations contained in the HFA are addressed, among others, to all Organizations of the UN system, including of course UNESCO, which are called upon to implement them “*within their mandates, priorities and resources*” (HFA, page 16). The HFA identifies specific gaps and challenges in the following five main areas:
 - a) Governance: organizational, legal and policy frameworks;
 - b) Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning;
 - c) Knowledge management and education;
 - d) Reducing underlying risk factors;
 - e) Preparedness for effective response and recovery.
18. With respect to these main areas, the HFA has adopted five priorities for action and a series of related activities. The five priorities are the following:
 - a) Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
 - b) Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.
 - c) Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
 - d) Reduce the underlying risk factors.
 - e) Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

A. 5) Current efforts by the heritage sector in the field of disaster preparedness

19. The issue of human-made disasters and their impact on cultural heritage has been initially addressed by UNESCO through the ***Convention for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Time of Armed Conflict***³ (The Hague Convention -1954). Drawing from concerns originating after the Second World War and renewed in 1992 because of the high and visible incidence of disasters and armed conflict on television in the early 90s, UNESCO and other partner institutions such as ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, and ICOM have in the past years further developed a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of site managers to address risk management for World Heritage cultural and natural properties.

² This document is accessible on the web at: <http://www.unisdr.org/> (March 2006)

³ The text of this Convention is accessible online at www.icomos.org/hague (May 2006)

Besides a number of international meetings and workshops, these included the preparation of guidelines for integrating risk preparedness in the management of World Cultural Heritage (Stovel, 1998) and more recently the development of *Training Kits on Risk Preparedness* by ICCROM. In parallel, ICOMOS, ICOM, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the International Council on Archives (ICA) established in 1996 the *International Committee for the Blue Shield*, a partnership and coordinating mechanism among the main international NGOs in the heritage sector.

20. The World Heritage Centre, ICCROM, and the Agency of Cultural Affairs of Japan co-organized a Special Thematic Session on Risk Management for Cultural Heritage during the UN *World Conference on Disaster Reduction*, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan in Jan. 2005. This Session, in which representatives of ICOMOS also participated, resulted in an Outcome Document⁴ containing some innovative ideas on the subject of risk as related to heritage. Among them was the realization that the field of heritage conservation had to harmonize its terminology and conceptual framework with the broader sector of disaster reduction (as this is called in the wider UN and international context). More importantly, the Document brought forward relatively new perspectives on risks as related to heritage, by shedding light on aspects that had been previously somehow neglected. Where previously emphasis was mostly placed on protecting physical heritage **from** disasters, the Kobe Document recognized that heritage, together with the traditional knowledge that created it, could be a fundamental resource **for** reducing risks from disasters for lives, properties and livelihoods, and therefore could contribute actively to sustainable human development. It was also recognized that heritage, given its prominent place in the community, could be used to make a significant contribution during the response phase of a disaster.
21. If these new approaches to risks for heritage were endorsed by the international community, this would greatly facilitate the integration of concern for heritage into general policies and practices for disaster mitigation, and the consideration of heritage as a legitimate beneficiary of development aid in preparation for or following major disasters. This is unfortunately not the case today, as shown by the Flash Appeal launched in January 2005 by the UN following the tsunami of South Asia⁵. Of the 977 million dollars requested to the international donor community, in fact, not one concerned the rehabilitation of the heritage.
22. While considering the issue of disasters in the context of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties, at its 29th Session in July 2005 (Durban, South Africa), the World Heritage Committee requested therefore the Centre and the Advisory Bodies to “*take into account the recommendations of the Kobe Thematic Session on “Risk Management for Cultural Heritage” in the elaboration of the strategy on risk-preparedness to be examined by the Committee at its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006)*” (Decision **29 COM 7B.b**)

⁴ Accessible on: www.unisdr.org/wcdr/thematic-sessions/thematic-reports/report-session-3-3.pdf (March 2006)

⁵ Accessible on: <http://ocha.unog.ch/ets/Default.aspx> (March 2006)

B. Definitions and scope

B. 1) Terminology

23. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies discussed extensively the possible scope of this Strategy, as different interpretations of the terms “risk” and “risk-preparedness” exist in the field of heritage conservation.
24. For the exclusive purpose of this Strategy, and taking into account the context of the above-mentioned decisions taken by the Committee, it was proposed that risk should be intended as risk arising from disasters, commonly defined within the UN as “*a serious disruption of the functioning of society, causing widespread human, material or environmental losses which exceed the ability of affected society to cope using only its own resources*”⁶. This strategy, therefore, will not cover gradual cumulative processes/factors affecting the state of conservation of a World Heritage property, such as pollution, tourism or urban encroachment. It is recognized, however, that the present strategy should be seen as a part of this larger context. Where possible, useful knowledge developed within this larger context should be incorporated into the actions that come out of this strategy.
25. Moreover, with an aim to conform to the universally accepted terminology, it is suggested to adopt the expression “disaster risk reduction”, rather than “risk-preparedness”. The former is indeed the term widely used by the UN system and international development agencies, to encompass all efforts at different stages to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks within the society, and to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development. Accordingly, the present document will make reference to the widely acknowledged distinction between Readiness (before a disaster), Response (during a disaster) and Recovery (post disaster) as the three main phases characterizing all risk reduction strategies.
26. Risk, moreover, is commonly defined as the product of a threat (likelihood of occurrence of hazard) by vulnerability (susceptibility of heritage to deterioration). Reducing risk, therefore, can involve either acting on the threats or the vulnerability or both.

B. 2) Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change

27. By its Decision **29 COM 7B.a**, the World Heritage Committee requested the “*World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, interested States Parties and petitioners, to establish a broad working group of experts to: a) review the nature and scale of the risks posed to World Heritage properties arising specifically from climate change; and b) jointly develop a strategy to assist States Parties to implement appropriate management responses*”. The same decision of the Committee requested the Centre to organize an expert meeting and prepare a “*joint report on “Predicting and managing the effects of climate change on World Heritage”, to be examined by the Committee at its 30th session (Vilnius,*

⁶ Definition from the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) – 2006 - <http://www.unisdr.org/> (March 2006)

2006)”. The outcome of this meeting, which took place on 16 and 17 March 2006, is contained in document *WHC-06/30 COM/7.1*.

28. During the meeting, it was recognised that climate change may have both long-term, gradual effects on World Heritage sites, and may also be responsible for the occurrence of more frequent or severe disasters. The present strategy does not focus specifically on Climate Change, but should be seen being complementary to the results of the recently concluded working group meeting. Where possible, this strategy will implicitly integrate concern for the possible effects of Climate Change into its provisions.

B. 3) Scope of the Strategy

29. With reference to the spirit and letter of Decision **28 COM 10.B**, therefore, the scope of the present Strategy will include both the reduction of risks from disasters at World Heritage properties, and relevant World Heritage policies and procedures, including the use of Emergency Assistance under the World Heritage Fund, State of Conservation Reporting, Periodic Reporting, In-Danger Listing, and the Global Training Strategy.
30. For the purpose of this Strategy, risks are to be understood as risks that affect the cultural or natural heritage values of World Heritage sites or their integrity and/or authenticity, in line with the overall aim of the 1972 *Convention*. In practice, organizations and professionals concerned with heritage will have to work together with those institutions responsible for addressing the broader generic risks to lives and properties within the boundaries of World Heritage sites and attempt to integrate heritage concerns into the larger disaster risk framework.
31. Finally, it is important to underline that the protection from disasters of the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage property may imply the reduction of risks to persons, objects and collections associated with it. In this respect, three types of movable heritage would need to be taken into account:
 - a) Holders/carriers/keepers of intangible heritage;
 - b) Items located within the boundaries of a World Heritage property and which form an integral part of its significant physical attributes (such as archaeological collections or original collections or furniture within a historic building);
 - c) Items which are outside of the boundaries of the World Heritage property, but that represent essential original records of its history and value (such as archival documents, historic photographs, etc.).

II. Strategy for Reducing Risks from Disasters At World Heritage Properties⁷

A. Purpose of the strategy

32. The purpose of this Strategy is twofold:

- a) To strengthen the protection of World Heritage and contribute to sustainable development by assisting States Parties to the *Convention* to integrate heritage concerns into national disaster reduction policies and to incorporate concern for disaster reduction within management plans and systems for World Heritage properties in their territories; and
- b) To provide guidance to States Parties, the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre, and the Advisory Bodies to integrate disaster risk reduction into World Heritage strategic planning and management, including the allocation and use of Emergency Assistance under the World Heritage Fund.

B. Objectives and recommended actions

B. 1) General considerations

33. In determining the appropriate means to achieve the expected purposes of the Strategy, the following key considerations should be made, which are relevant to all of the objectives and actions:

- a) Cultural and natural heritage, with their related technologies, practices, skills, knowledge systems and ecosystem's goods and services can play an important positive role in reducing risks from disasters at all phases of the process (readiness, response and recovery), and hence in contributing to sustainable development in general;
- b) The key to an effective reduction of risks from disasters is advance planning and the building of a culture of prevention;
- c) In developing plans for reducing risks at World Heritage properties it is essential to give adequate consideration to cultural diversity, age, vulnerable groups and gender perspective;
- d) Property occupants and users, and concerned communities in general, should be always involved in planning for disaster risk reduction.

⁷ World Heritage properties are cultural and natural heritage sites whose significance "is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity". A list of World Heritage properties is maintained and up-dated every year by an inter-governmental Committee (also known as the World Heritage Committee) in the framework of the *World Heritage Convention*, adopted by the general Conference of UNESCO in 1972. More information on the *Convention* and its List of World Heritage properties can be found on the internet at: <http://whc.unesco.org>

- e) The protection of the Outstanding Universal Value and the integrity and authenticity of World Heritage properties from disasters implies consideration for the associated intangible aspects and movable items that contribute directly to its heritage significance.

B. 2) Objectives and priority actions

- 34. In order to achieve the stated purposes of the Strategy, a series of objectives and related actions have been identified. These have been structured around the five main priorities for action defined by the Hyogo Framework for Action⁸, but adapted to reflect the specific concerns and characteristics of World Heritage.
- 35. The five objectives are the following:
 - a) Strengthen support within relevant global, regional, national and local institutions for reducing risks at World Heritage properties;
 - b) Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of disaster prevention at World Heritage properties;
 - c) Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks at World Heritage properties;
 - d) Reduce underlying risk factors at World Heritage properties;
 - e) Strengthen disaster preparedness at World Heritage properties for effective response at all levels.
- 36. These objectives correspond to the spirit of Article 5 of the *World Heritage Convention*⁹, requiring States Parties to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on their territory. They also fit within three of the four Strategic Objectives established by the World Heritage Committee through its *Budapest Declaration*¹⁰, namely Conservation, Capacity-Building and Communication.
- 37. Objectives and related priority actions of the Strategy are shown in **Table 1** here below, indicating as well the different groups responsible for their implementation. These range from the States Parties to the *Convention* to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, extending to concerned inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations at international and regional levels and academic circles. Action points are listed by the relative objective and level of implementation.

⁸ The most recent and important global policy text on risk reduction is the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* (HFA), adopted at the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan. Taking place 11 years after the adoption of the seminal *Yokohama Strategy (1994)*, and five years after the end of the *UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR, 1990-1999)*, the HFA sets out the UN-wide strategic plan for reducing risks from disasters over the next decade. The HFA is accessible online at: <http://www.unisdr.org/> (March 2006)

⁹ Accessible online at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/175/> (May 2006)

¹⁰ Accessible online at: http://whc.unesco.org/documents/publi_basictexts_en.pdf (May 2006)

TABLE 1. Objectives and Priority Actions

Objectives	Actions		By whom
1. Strengthen support within relevant global, regional, national and local institutions for reducing risks at World Heritage properties <i>Global actors for disaster reduction should give more consideration to cultural and natural heritage among the issues to be considered when defining their strategic goals and planning their development cooperation activities. At the same time, general disaster reduction strategies at regional, country and local levels must take into account and integrate concern for world cultural and natural heritage in their policies and implementation mechanisms</i>	Global	1.1 Strengthen policies and funding provisions for disaster reduction within the World Heritage system, including by streamlining concern for disaster risk management in preparation of Tentative Lists, nominations, monitoring, periodic reporting and International Assistance processes	World Heritage Committee States Parties
		1.2 Promote cultural and natural heritage and its potential positive role for disaster reduction and sustainable development within relevant international development institutions, global forums and other potential financial partners as a means to raising support for the protection of heritage from disasters	States Parties, World Heritage Centre Advisory Bodies (<i>hereinafter ABs</i>)
		1.3 Develop case studies and indicators to demonstrate the contribution of cultural and natural heritage, including in environmental, social and economic terms, to sustainable development, particularly in case of disasters	ABs, Universities, Professional associations
		1.4 States should ratify the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its protocols	States Parties
	Regional National Local	1.5 Include consideration for cultural and natural heritage within integrated multi-sectoral strategies for risk reduction at regional, national and local levels, by involving qualified heritage expertise and institutions in the planning and implementation stages	States Parties, Concerned national institutions, including the Army
		1.6 Strengthen consideration for disaster risk reduction for cultural and natural heritage within national legislations and procedures for Environmental Impact Assessments, and provide the necessary means and resources to the responsible national agencies	States Parties
		1.7 Include disaster reduction and risk management within agendas and work-plans of regional heritage organizations and networks	States Parties Regional Organizations
		1.8 Promote the establishment of national Blue Shield Committees ¹¹ , as appropriate, to strengthen integration among concerned institutions and professional networks and enhance support for disaster reduction	Concerned national institutions ICBS, Abs,
		1.9 Promote community participation in, and mobilize local support for disaster risk assessment and reduction at World Heritage properties	States Parties WH site managers
	Global	2.1 Integrate concern for disaster risk reduction into the WH Global Training Strategy	World Heritage Centre ABs

¹¹ The Blue Shield is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. It is the symbol specified in the 1954 Hague Convention for marking cultural sites to give them protection from attack in the event of armed conflict. It is also the name of an international committee set up in 1996 to work to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by wars and natural disasters. This committee is composed by four partner institutions (ICOMOS, the International Council on Museums (ICOM), the International Council of Archives (ICA) and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)). National Blue Shield Committees are defined and accredited by the ICBS as a national corresponding entity grouping the national committees of ICOMOS, ICOM and accredited representatives of the archives and libraries organizations. Further information can be accessed online at: <http://www.ifla.org/blueshield.htm>

Objectives	Actions		By whom
culture of disaster prevention at WH properties <i>The building of a culture of prevention, at all levels, is one of the key elements for a successful disaster reduction strategy. Experience shows that reacting a posteriori, especially as far as heritage is concerned, is an increasingly ineffective way of responding to the needs of people affected by disasters. Training, education and research, including on relevant traditional knowledge, are the most effective ways of developing a culture of preparedness. This particular area of actions fits entirely within the broader mandate of UNESCO as the UN intellectual arm, in particular for establishing global knowledge networks</i>		2.2 Integrate concern for tangible, intangible and movable heritage within the context of disaster risk reduction strategies	States Parties World Heritage Centre ABs
		2.3 Develop awareness materials on risk from disasters at World Heritage properties, addressed at local government officials, site managers and the youth.	States Parties World Heritage Centre, ABs
		2.4 Develop up-dated teaching/learning resource materials (guidelines, training kits, case studies and technical studies, glossaries) on disaster reduction for World Heritage and disseminate them widely among site managers and the public at large	World Heritage Centre, AB's, Universities
		2.5 Promote dialogue and cooperation and strengthen networks among relevant disaster reduction professional institutions (including ICOMOS and its partner organizations of the International Committee of the Blue Shield), experts, academicians, heritage site managers and policy/decision makers to facilitate exchange of experiences and the integration of strategies	World Heritage Centre, AB's, Universities, Professional associations
		2.6 Adapt existing methods for multi-risks assessment and cost-benefits analysis of risk reduction actions to the special context of World Heritage properties, and disseminate these in the form of guidelines within concerned regional and national institutions and site managers	Universities, Professional associations
		2.7 Promote and develop research programmes, drawing both from modern sciences and traditional knowledge systems, to identify means of preventing and reducing disasters at heritage properties as well as existing or past traditional knowledge and skills that could contribute to disaster reduction strategies and sustainable development, and disseminate their results in usable forms	Universities, ABs, Site Management authorities
	Regional National Local	2.8 Strengthen the capacity of World Heritage properties' managers, through field-based training programmes, in developing and implementing risk management plans at their sites and contributing to regional and national disaster reduction strategies and processes	States Parties World Heritage Centre, ABs Universities
		2.9 Promote the inclusion of disaster risk reduction knowledge in relevant sections of university and national school curricula at all levels in association with information on World Heritage properties and their vulnerabilities	ABs, Universities Schools
		2.10 Conduct awareness raising campaigns and education programmes at different levels (policy-makers, site-managers, the general public and the youth) and by means of different media on the role of heritage at times of disasters, the importance of developing appropriate preventive and mitigating strategies for reducing risks at World Heritage properties and the possible means to implement them, possibly on the occasion of national heritage days	States parties Universities Professional associations

Objectives	Actions		By whom
		2.11 Conduct community-based training initiatives, considering the role of volunteers, as appropriate, to enhance local capacities to mitigate disasters at World Heritage properties	Site management authorities, Universities, Professional associations, ABs
3. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks at WH properties <i>The first step to reduce disasters and mitigating their impact is the identification of possible risk factors, including from global agents such as climate change. The vulnerabilities from disasters to World Heritage properties must be therefore identified, assessed in their level of priority and closely monitored, so as to inform the appropriate risk management strategies</i>	Global	3.1 Record, analyze and disseminate statistical data and information at global and regional level on the occurrence of disasters, their typology and their impacts on World Heritage properties	World Heritage Centre
		3.2 Develop a World Heritage Risk map at the global level or regional levels to assist States Parties and the Committee to better develop responses	World Heritage Centre States Parties
		3.3 Identify, assess and monitor risks related to climate change within disaster risk reduction policies and approaches at World Heritage properties	W. H. Committee World Heritage Centre ABs
	Regional National Local	3.4 Develop and periodically up-date national risk maps and related information for decision makers, the general public and communities at risk, indicating the hazards that might affect negatively World Heritage properties	States Parties ABs, site authorities Regional heritage organizations
		3.5 Develop research and monitoring programmes, including by using geophysical analysis and remote sensing technologies as appropriate, to identify and monitor underlying risk factors that might enable or aggravate disasters	Site Managers
		3.6 Conduct risk identification and assessments activities at World Heritage properties, with due consideration for underlying risk factors, including all necessary expertise and involving all concerned communities if appropriate	Site Managers
		3.7 Develop early warning systems to prevent and reduce risks from disasters at WH properties, where appropriate	States Parties,
		3.8 Develop indicators and monitoring programmes to measure levels of risks from disasters at World Heritage properties	ABs, Site Managers, Professional Associations
4. Reduce underlying risk factors at WH properties <i>When a disaster occurs, there are a number of underlying factors that can significantly aggravate its impact. These include land/water and other natural resources management, industrial and urban development, and socio-economic practices. Removing the root causes of vulnerability implies often the identification and reduction of</i>	Global		
	Regional National Local	4.1 Implement as a priority emergency measures to mitigate significant risks from disasters that are likely to affect the Outstanding Universal Value and the authenticity and/or integrity of World Heritage properties	Site Managers
		4.2 Document all the tangible and intangible features and characteristics of World Heritage properties contributing to their Outstanding Universal Value, and ensure that copies of the related records (duplicates) or artifacts are kept in safe locations	Site Managers
		4.3 Encourage the sustainable use and management of urban areas and ecosystems at regional, national and site levels, including through better land/water-use planning and development activities to reduce risks and vulnerabilities from disasters	Site management authorities Planning authorities

Objectives	Actions		By whom
<i>underlying risk factors associated to human activities</i>		4.5 Incorporate disaster risk assessment into rural development planning and management of World Heritage properties and surrounding areas, in particular with regard to mountain, river's flood plain areas and marine/coastal zones, including through the identification of land zones that are available and safe for human settlement or relocation of people in case of emergencies	Site management authorities, Planning authorities
		4.6 Consider the revision of existing, or the development of new national building codes, standards, rehabilitation and reconstruction practices, with due consideration for local traditional systems, skills and cultural differences, with the aim of making them more applicable in the local context and, with a view to fostering disaster-resistant structures	States parties, Site Managers, Professional Associations, Universities
		4.7 Integrate concern for underlying risk factors related to climate change within disaster risk reduction policies and approaches at World Heritage properties	Site managers
		4.8 Develop social training programmes for communities living within or around World Heritage properties including consideration for heritage as a resource to mitigate psychological damage of vulnerable population, particularly children, in the aftermath of disasters	Site managers
		4.9 Promote the development of financial risk-sharing mechanisms at World Heritage properties, particularly insurance and reinsurance against disasters	Site managers
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness at World Heritage properties for effective response at all levels <i>The worst consequences of natural or human-made disasters can often be avoided or mitigated if all those concerned are prepared to act according to well conceived risk reduction plans, and the necessary human and financial resources, and equipment, are available</i>	Global		
	Regional National Site	5.1 Ensure that well conceived disaster risk-reductions policies and procedures are integrated within management plans with identified priorities. For World Heritage cultural properties the scope of these plans should be towards protecting the key assets that contribute towards the Outstanding Universal Value and should also include the protection of any significant original archival records that contribute to their heritage value, whether or not they are located within the boundaries of the World Heritage property. For natural properties such plans should be oriented to protect the key ecosystems and processes from which the integrity of the property depends upon.	States Parties, Site Managers
		5.2 Ensure that all those concerned by the implementation of disaster reduction plans at World Heritage properties, including community members and volunteers, are aware of their respective roles and are well and systematically trained in the application of their tasks	Site Managers
		5.3 Conduct periodical exercises at World Heritage properties to test the effectiveness of disaster response, recovery policies and procedures, involving all those concerned at different levels	Site Managers

Objectives	Actions		By whom
		5.4 Ensure business continuity management and supply chain management by establishing specific funding provisions and contingency plans within national budgets to cope with unexpected emergency situations derived from disasters at World Heritage properties	States parties

III. Proposed Policies and Criteria for the use of Emergency Assistance Funds

A. Current policies

38. Currently, the policies for the use of the Emergency Assistance Funds are described in paragraph 241 of the *Operational Guidelines*. According to this paragraph:

“This assistance may be requested to address ascertained or potential threats facing properties included on the List of World Heritage in Danger and the World Heritage List which have suffered severe damage or are in imminent danger of severe damage due to sudden, unexpected phenomena. Such phenomena may include land subsidence, extensive fires, explosions, flooding or man-made disasters including war. This assistance does not concern cases of damage or deterioration caused by gradual processes of decay, pollution or erosion. It addresses emergency situations strictly relating to the conservation of a World Heritage property (see Decision 28 COM 10B 2.c). It may be made available, if necessary, to more than one World Heritage property in a single State Party (see Decision 6 EXT. COM 15.2). The budget ceilings relate to a single World Heritage property.

The assistance may be requested to:

- (i) undertake emergency measures for the safeguarding of the property;*
- (ii) draw up an emergency plan for the property.”*

39. Further guidance on the use of Emergency Assistance should be provided in the future in Annex 9 of the *Operational Guidelines* (to be completed), entitled “*Evaluation criteria by the Advisory Bodies for International Assistance requests*”.
40. The evaluation submitted to the Committee in 2004¹² raised a number of issues on the relevance and efficiency of the Emergency Assistance programme, and called for a reassessment of its policies and procedures.

B. Relevance and effectiveness

41. For the purpose of the Emergency Assistance programme, it is important to determine what makes a heritage property subject to an “*ascertained or potential threat*”. In general, a threat is present when there is a possibility that something bad (such as physical damage) could happen in the future, that is when there is a risk combined with a time factor. A threat, therefore, does not necessarily imply that damage has actually occurred, but only a risk of damage. If this risk, or danger, is **imminent**, and the damage involved would be substantial, then the situation could be qualified as an **emergency**. An assessment on the imminent nature of a risk and on the extent of its potential impact can only be made case by case, based on technical considerations.

¹² Cf. Document WHC.04/28.COM/10B

B. 1) What is an emergency?

42. In the light of this definition, Emergency Assistance should be provided only in cases when an imminent danger related to a natural or human-made disaster is threatening the overall Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage property and its authenticity and/or integrity, to prevent or at least significantly mitigate its possible negative impact on the site. Emergency assistance could be provided also to assess whether or not such imminent danger is present, for example as a result of a major disaster. When, on the contrary, due to a disaster, a certain loss of heritage has already taken place, but there is no more imminent threat or risk that must be addressed as a matter of urgency, other forms of assistance would appear to be more appropriate (e.g. technical cooperation).

B. 2) Ensuring viability

43. Another important issue raised by the evaluation conducted in 2004 is the impact of the activities carried out under Emergency Assistance, be they emergency measures or a plan. In the past, many activities seem to have had no measurable impact on the threat affecting a property, either because they were not properly conceived or due to a lack of evaluation/monitoring. This is a question which involves consideration for the scale of the problems to be addressed, as compared to the available resources. The limited amounts available under the World Heritage Fund are often painfully inadequate to cope with the needs resulting from a major disaster. Proposals for funding under the Emergency Assistance programme, nevertheless, should be conceived so as to ensure that a specific and serious risk affecting a World Heritage property can be effectively mitigated within the scope of the activity to be implemented.

B. 3) Prioritizing emergencies

44. In establishing priorities for granting Emergency Assistance, moreover, it is important to consider whether the risk to be reduced has the potential, if not mitigated, to affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the World heritage property and its authenticity and/or integrity. This would be the case if the possible loss that might occur as a result of the above risk could compromise the overall capacity of the property to convey and maintain, through its tangible and intangible attributes, the cultural or natural heritage value expressed by the criteria under which it had been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

C. Proposed policies

45. In the light of the above, it is suggested that Emergency Assistance be granted only when one of the following two conditions apply:

1) Ascertained threat

According to a reliable technical assessment, the present situation of disaster risk may suddenly and drastically develop in substantial damage to the overall heritage significance of the property (the Outstanding Universal Value), i.e. the proposed intervention must be carried out in a timely manner because the danger is imminent and substantial. This may be

applied to sites in response to a specific known disaster or to sites in zones where disasters take place on a frequent and recurring basis. Moreover, the proposed activities, alone or combined with other on-going initiatives, should remove or significantly reduce the disaster risk for the heritage significance of the property, thus gaining essential time for the implementation of long-term safeguarding measures.

2) *Potential threat*

Following a major disaster, it is urgent to assess whether there is any imminent danger that is threatening the World Heritage property and, in the affirmative, determine the appropriate immediate protective measures.

46. It would follow from this proposed policy that Emergency Assistance funds need not be automatically granted after a major disaster has occurred, unless one of the above two conditions apply. On the other hand, they might be granted before a possible disaster, if one of the two above conditions applies.
47. It should be noted that Emergency Assistance should be used only for cases of disaster risk and not in cases where more slow acting dangers caused by lack of maintenance or other ongoing deterioration are present.
48. As a final consideration, States Parties should be encouraged to use the Technical Assistance category of International Assistance to develop disaster risk reduction plans for World Heritage properties. These plans should be integrated into management plans, where they already exist, or should be an integral part of new management plans to be developed.

D. Examples

49. To further clarify the implications of the proposed policy, the following are some examples (referring to cultural properties, but the concept does not change) of specific cases when Emergency Assistance would or would not be granted.

D. 1) Examples of relevant cases when Emergency Assistance would be granted include:

50. *Before a possible disaster*

A. A monumental complex entirely built in wood has no fire prevention system and is located in a zone prone to regular fires. According to a technical report, it is established that a fire could happen at any time which would have the potential to burn down the property, implying a total loss of the OUV. The proposed intervention would set up an effective fire prevention system within a short time and the available funds.

51. *After a disaster*

B. A recently occurred earthquake has de-stabilized a historic structure bearing ancient mural painting of exceptional significance for the OUV of the property. The collapse of the structure may happen at any time, causing the irreparable loss of the mural paintings. The proposed emergency intervention, which can be

carried out within a limited time and the available funds, would stabilize the structure and enable its future consolidation.

C. A religious building on the World Heritage List has just experienced a major flood due to heavy rains. There is concern that the water infiltration has weakened the foundations and may lead to potential collapse of some of the walls. In addition, the rising damp has caused important wall paintings to become detached from the structure. The proposal for Emergency Assistance is to assess the condition of the building and the paintings to assess if they are in imminent danger, and to determine immediate protective measures that might be required.

D. 2) Examples of relevant cases when Emergency Assistance would not be granted include:

52. *Before a possible disaster*

A. The gradual rise of the water table threatens an archaeological area and some damage has been observed in selected spots due to damp in structures. It is not clear what impact the process may have on the overall OUV of the property and what is the timeframe involved. The proposed intervention is a study on the hydrogeology of the area which will provide an assessment of the gravity of the situation and make recommendations. (Technical cooperation assistance could be requested for this activity.)

53. *After a disaster*

B. An earthquake has caused major destructions to a group of monumental buildings. Large amounts of money are necessary to rehabilitate the complex. There is no demonstrated particular urgency to intervene. The intervention proposed for funding is a study for the establishment of a restoration methodology, or the restoration of a single element of the complex. (Technical cooperation assistance could be requested for this activity, or it could be incorporated into a larger request for the site to other funding agencies.)

E. Possible implications

54. If the above policy was retained by the World Heritage Committee, the two following actions could be taken:

- a) Format for emergency assistance requests to be re-drafted, including requirement to clarify what is the specific imminent threat/danger affecting the property, what reliable data and information demonstrate such threat/danger, how it might affect the overall Outstanding Universal Value and authenticity and/or integrity of the property, and how the proposed activity intends to mitigate/prevent it.
- b) These policies and the indicators required to measure its successful implementation to be integrated in the criteria for evaluation of international assistance by the Advisory Bodies in the future Annex 9 of the *Operational Guidelines*, to be developed by the Advisory Bodies and submitted to the consideration of the Committee at its 31 session in 2007.

III. Draft Decision

Draft Decision: 30 COM 7.2

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Takes note of, and endorses the Strategy for Reducing Risks from Disasters at World Heritage properties;*
2. *Requests the World Heritage Centre to disseminate it widely through its web-site and other appropriate means;*
3. *Encourages States Parties to the Convention and other concerned partners to implement its recommended actions to strengthen disaster reduction strategies at World Heritage properties;*
4. *Further encourages States Parties to the Convention, in particular, to integrate concern for World Heritage into wider national disaster reduction plans and to develop Management Plans that include a risk-analysis and management component for World Heritage properties located in their territories;*
5. *Requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop a user-friendly resource material to build-capacity on disaster reduction at World Heritage properties as well as a training module to test it at pilot sites within disaster-prone regions;*
6. *Further requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to prepare a revised draft format for Emergency Assistance requests including the requirement to clarify what is the specific serious threat/danger affecting the property, how it might affect its overall Outstanding Universal Value, and how the proposed activity intends to mitigate/prevent it, and submit it to the Committee for consideration at its 31st session in 2007;*
7. *Requests, moreover, the Advisory Bodies to take into account the policies proposed in Point III of the working Document WHC-06/30.COM/7.2 in the elaboration of the criteria for evaluation of international assistance requests, to be included to the Operational Guidelines in its Annex 9;*
8. *Invites the international donor community to support the implementation of the Strategy in developing countries within disaster-prone areas as a priority;*
9. *Decides to consider the possible allocation of the amount of USD 50,000 under item 15 of its agenda, concerning adjustments to the budget (see Document WHC-06/30.COM/15, paragraph 24, draft Decision **30 COM 15.2**), for the development and dissemination of a user-friendly resource material to build capacity on disaster reduction at World Heritage properties.*