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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

BUREAU OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-first session
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room X (Fontenoy)

23 - 28 June 1997

Item 4.1 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List:

Reports on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

SUMMARY

In accordance with paragraphs 82-89 of the Operational Guidelines, the Secretariat submits herewith reports on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Where appropriate, the Secretariat or the advisory bodies will provide additional information during the session of the Bureau.

Decision required: The Bureau is requested to examine the attached state of conservation reports and to take the appropriate action in preparation for the decision making by the Committee.

INTRODUCTION

1. Reports on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger are submitted to the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee to facilitate the 'review at regular intervals [of] the state of property on the List of World Heritage in Danger' which is foreseen in paragraph 88 of the Operational Guidelines.

2. The Bureau is requested to examine these reports and to take the appropriate action in preparation for the decision making by the Committee in accordance with paragraph 89 of the Operational Guidelines which reads as follows:

"On the basis of these regular reviews, the Committee shall decide, in consultation with the State Party concerned whether:

- (i) additional measures are required to conserve the property;*
- (ii) to delete the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger if the property is no longer under threat;*
- (iii) to consider the deletion of the property from both the List of World Heritage in Danger and the World Heritage List if the property has deteriorated to the extent that it has lost those characteristics which determined its inclusion in the World Heritage List, in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraphs 46 to 56 above."*

3. To facilitate the work of the Bureau, each report is accompanied by a draft decision for examination and adoption by the Bureau.

NATURAL HERITAGE

4. The Committee at its twentieth session (Merida, 1996) examined reports on the state of conservation of nine natural properties included in the List of World Heritage in Danger and decided to add four more natural properties to that List. The Committee's recommendations and observations on the thirteen natural properties in the List of World Heritage in Danger were transmitted to the States Parties concerned in January 1997.

5. In the case of Srebarna Nature Reserve (Bulgaria) and Everglades National Park (United States of America) new information has neither been received nor is expected to be received before the Bureau session.

6. Since the conclusion of the last session of the Committee, new information has been obtained on the following eleven natural World Heritage sites in Danger.

Plitvice Lakes National Park (Croatia)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1979

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1992.

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee determined that the World Heritage values of Plitvice Lakes National Park had not been adversely impacted by the armed conflict of the early 1990's, and concluded that the natural systems of the site were recovering from pre-war over-development and over-use. Yet, the Committee decided to retain Plitvice Lakes National Park in the List of World Heritage in Danger, because it recognized potential post-war threats due to rising visitor-impacts, and the damaged condition of the Park's infrastructure. The Committee requested Croatia to provide a state of conservation report on Plitvice Lakes National Park by 15 September 1997.

The Croatian authorities, via their letter of 17 March 1997 to the Centre have thanked the Committee for its constant care for the state of conservation of Plitvice Lakes National Park and provided the following information:

- (i) The Croatian Parliament has decided on new boundaries for the site, increasing the total area of the Park to cover the whole underground basin which supply water to the Lakes and streams of Plitvice;
- (ii) The Park Management has cooperated with the Environmental Know How Fund of the British Embassy in Zagreb to train three Park employees in the United Kingdom on the theme "Ranger as Communicator";
- (iii) A road outside the northeast boundary of the Park is being constructed to re-direct trucks currently passing through the Park and, in the long-term, to limit the use of Park roads to meet the needs of local inhabitants only; and
- (iv) A state of conservation report on the Plitvice Lakes National Park, including the experience of the management of visitors during the summer of 1997, will be submitted to the Centre.

Decision required: The Bureau may wish to adopt the following:

"The Bureau commends the Croatian authorities for deciding to increase the total area of the Park to cover the whole underground basin supplying Plitvice's Lakes and streams and to construct a road outside of the northeast boundary in order to redirect truck-traffic currently flowing through the Park. The Bureau recommends that the Committee, after reviewing the state of conservation report due by 15 September 1997, decide, whether or not to remove Plitvice Lakes National Park from the List of World Heritage in Danger."

Sangay National Park (Ecuador)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1983

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1992.

At its last session (Merida, 1996), while commending the Park administration's (Instituto Ecuatoriano Forestal y de Areas Naturales y Vida Silvestre, (INEFAN)) actions and reports, the Committee reiterated its serious concerns about road construction activities, poaching and colonization, and its request for an Environmental Impact Assessment. The Committee

requested Ecuador to provide a report by 15 April 1997, for consideration by the Bureau. No such report had been received at the time of preparation of this document.

IUCN has informed the Centre that it will provide a written report on Sangay for the Bureau meeting. A representative of Ecuador is expected to submit a status of conservation report on Sangay at the World Heritage Workshop, to be convened during the First Latin American Parks Congress, in Santa Marta, Columbia (21-28 May, 1997).

Decision required: The Bureau, based on new information that may be available at the time of its meeting, may review the state of conservation of Sangay and make appropriate recommendations for the consideration of the Committee

Simen National Park (Ethiopia)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1978

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1996.

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee took note of the report of the technical mission to the site, (2-9 November 1996), which identified the deterioration of the Walia ibex population, loss of biodiversity, encroachment at the borders of the site and impacts of the construction of a road through the Park, and IUCN's position that all the requirements for Simen's inclusion in the List of World Heritage in Danger, as stipulated in Paragraph 79 of the Operational Guidelines, were met. Hence, the Committee decided to include Simen National Park in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The Head of the Bureau of Agriculture of the Bahir Dar Region, Dr. Belay Demissie, via his letter of 24 March 1997 to the Centre, has transmitted his Regional Government's disagreement with the Committee's decision to include Simen in the List of World Heritage in Danger. Dr. Demissie has drawn the Centre's attention to the fact that although Simen was neglected during the past regime, currently Simen receives high attention and effective protection; the Central and the Regional Governments are implementing a rehabilitation programme to restore the Park's infrastructure to its previous state. Dr. Demissie notes the 'increment in the number of Walia Ibex as a result of proper protection of the Park'. Furthermore, he has indicated that the Regional Authorities do not accept the statement in page 24 of the report of the technical mission to Simen, undertaken in November, 1996; i.e. "A majority of participants endorsed the recommendation that Simen Mountain National Park should be listed as world heritage site in danger". According to Dr. Demissie, this statement reflected the view of the consultants.

Since they do not concur with the Committee's decision to list Simen as a 'World Heritage in Danger', the Regional Authorities in Bahir Dar have decided not to convene the technical workshop, originally scheduled for 10-18 April, 1997, and for which the Committee approved a sum of US\$ 30,000 at its last session (Merida, 1996). They have called upon the Central Government of Ethiopia to cooperate with concerned national and regional institutions to organize a discussion forum with UNESCO in order to revert the decision taken by the Committee. In their view the technical workshop, which was to be held in April, 1997, was intended as a forum for increasing awareness among stakeholders and international donors of

the need to prepare and launch a multi-component sustainable conservation and development programme, and not for planning rehabilitation actions for a Simen because of its new status as 'World Heritage in Danger'.

At the time of the preparation of this document, the Centre, in cooperation with IUCN, is communicating with the Ethiopian authorities, including the Regional Authorities in Bahir Dar, in order to clarify the conflicting views on the status of Walia Ibex populations, as reported by the technical mission of November 1996 and by Dr. Demissie. The Centre is also seeking more information on the programme for rehabilitation of Park infrastructure which, according to Dr. Demissie, is being implemented by the Central and Regional Governments for Simen National Park.

Decision required: The Bureau, in the light of additional information that may be available at the time of its meeting, may consider the disagreement voiced by the Regional authorities in Bahir Dar with the Committee's decision to include Simen in the List of World Heritage in Danger, and propose specific actions which the Centre could take to resolve this matter before the twenty-first session of the Committee (December, 1997).

Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve (Guinea/Cote d'Ivoire)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1981

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1992.

A Round Table on this site, jointly organized by the Ministry for Energy and Environment and the "Mission Francaise de Cooperation et d'Action Culturelle" (April 1996), recommended that UNESCO consider the establishment of a working group to create an "International Foundation for Mount Nimba". At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee noted the outcome of the preliminary discussions of the working group and the fact that UNESCO's Legal Affairs Unit was considering the group's proposals. Furthermore, in view of the uncertainties and shortcomings remaining with regard to the management of Mount Nimba, the Committee decided to retain the site in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The Legal Affairs Unit of UNESCO has advised the Centre that UNESCO cannot create an International Foundation but that such a Foundation may be established under the national legislation of a suitable State Party; e.g. the Swiss Foundation established for the conservation of Banc d'Arguin World Heritage Area (Mauritania). On the other hand, contributions earmarked for Mt. Nimba could be set aside under a special account of the World Heritage Fund (as per paragraph 118 of the Operational Guidelines), or set up as a separate 'Funds-in-Trust', similar to the World Heritage Fund, within UNESCO.

Decision required: The Bureau may wish to consider the pros and cons of the three alternatives for setting up a Foundation or a special Fund for Mt. Nimba and direct the Centre to contact potential donors who participated in the Round Table and seek their preferences among the three options available. In addition the Bureau may

recommend that the Committee retain Mt. Nimba in the List of World Heritage in Danger in view of continuing uncertainties surrounding the management of the site.

Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1980

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1996.

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee, following on the Bureau's recommendation made at its twentieth session (Paris, 1996), included Rio Platano in the List of World Heritage in Danger and urged the Honduran authorities to implement the eleven-point corrective action, endorsed by the Honduran Minister for the Environment, and keep it informed, on a regular basis, of measures taken to safeguard this property.

The Centre received a letter from Honduran authorities dated 24 November 1996, indicating a breakdown of expenditures foreseen for the US\$ 30,000, approved by the Bureau at its twentieth session (Paris, 1996) for preparing a management plan for the Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve. The items of expenditures proposed in that letter did not correspond with those indicated in the project proposal approved by the Bureau. Hence, the Centre, via letter dated 17 December 1996, requested the Honduran authorities for a revised budgetary breakdown. A reply from the Honduran authorities is awaited.

IUCN has informed the Centre that it will submit a written report on Rio Platano for the Bureau meeting. In addition, a representative from Honduras is expected to submit a state of conservation report on Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve at the World Heritage Workshop, to be convened during the First Latin American Parks Congress in Santa Marta, Columbia, (21-28 May, 1997).

Decision required: Based on additional information to be made available at the time of its meeting, the Bureau may consider recommending that the Committee establish a time-table for implementing the eleven-point corrective action, including periodic review of progress by the Centre and IUCN.

Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1985

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1992.

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee noted that following discussions between the Centre and the Indian Government, a mission to Manas had been planned in late-January 1997. The Ministry for Environment and Forests (MOEF) of India, hosted a World Natural Heritage Site Managers' Meeting for South Asia, during 16-19 January 1997, in New Delhi and Keoladeo National Park (World Heritage site). The Director of Manas presented a report on the state of conservation of Manas at that Meeting. One of the Centre staff who participated in the Meeting, accompanied the Deputy Inspector for Wildlife in India on a mission to Manas during 20-22 January, 1997. As the Centre awaits the receipt of a state of conservation report and a rehabilitation plan for Manas, from MOEF, a summary of findings

based on the written report presented at the Meeting by the Director of Manas, and the site-visit to Manas, are provided below:

- (i) Bodo people, inhabiting lands in the vicinity of the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, intensified militant action in 1989. The negative impacts of Bodo militancy peaked in 1992-93, when 19 of the 31 ranger and guard units were destroyed. As the infrastructure for the protection of Manas weakened and staff became demoralized, poachers took a heavy toll of wildlife populations within Manas. The greater one-horned rhinoceros was the most adversely affected species; 33 rhinos were poached during 1992-93;
- (ii) Since 1993, when the work of the Bodo Autonomous Council to demarcate an area within the State of Assam for Bodo people gathered momentum, militant activity has diminished and Manas authorities have been able to improve relationships with surrounding villagers and seek their support for conservation. Peace and order in and around Manas have been re-established; an estimated 8,000 tourists visited Manas in 1996;
- (iii) Ranger and guard units remain damaged and are in urgent need of repair and/or reconstruction. The poaching threat continues to prevail as the mobility and the communications capability of Manas staff are quite limited; and
- (iv) The MOEF, together with the State Forest Department of Assam and the Directorate of the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary is elaborating a rehabilitation plan for Manas, including the reconstruction and significant upgrading of the infrastructure to ensure adequate protection. The plan is estimated to cost US\$ 6 million, most of which will be met by the Government of India and the State Government of Assam. The MOEF however, intends to seek emergency assistance from the World Heritage Fund up to an amount of US\$ 300,000 over a two-year period. The implementation of the rehabilitation plan is expected to require two years, at the end of which period the state of conservation of Manas will be reviewed. Depending on the outcome of that review, the Government of India may request the Committee to consider removing Manas from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Decision required: The Bureau may wish to review the state of conservation report and the rehabilitation plan expected to be available at the time of its meeting to suggest measures to be taken by the Centre and recommendations to the consideration of the Committee.

Air-and-Tenere Reserve (Niger)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1991

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1992.

Recalling the peace agreement, signed on 20 April 1995, which had started a dialogue between the conflicting parties and set in motion the process for a return to a normal management regime, the Committee, at its last session (Merida, 1996), noted that a detailed site-evaluation and the development of an action programme for site-recovery may become feasible in the near future. The Committee learnt of the possible resumption of an IUCN/WWF project, with funding from DANIDA, for re-establishing the normal management regime for the site.

By letter of 20 March 1997, the Permanent Delegation of Niger has provided the terms of reference for a monitoring mission to the site which has been transmitted to IUCN for comments. IUCN is expected to report on the findings of an IUCN/WWF mission to the site at the time of the Bureau meeting.

Decision required: The Bureau may wish to examine the report that is expected to be provided by IUCN with a view to advising the Committee on the current status of Air-and-Tenere, future plans for its recovery and whether or not it should be retained in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Ichkeul National Park (Tunisia)

Inscribed on the: World Heritage List: 1980

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1996.

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee learnt that the construction of two dams has limited freshwater flow and devastated the wetland values of Ichkeul National Park; dramatic increases in the salinity of the lake and marshes and sharp reductions in migratory bird populations have been evident. The Tunisian Minister for the Environment holds the view that the Ichkeul ecosystem is not irreversibly lost. Nevertheless, the Committee included Ichkeul in the List of World Heritage in Danger and requested the Tunisian authorities to provide a programme of corrective measures to reverse the degradation of the site, and alerted them to possibilities of the deletion of Ichkeul from the World Heritage List if rehabilitation of the site would not be possible.

A representative from Tunisia is expected to provide an update on the state of conservation of Ichkeul at the Regional Training Workshop for Arab States, to be held in Morocco, during 5-16 May, 1997.

Decision required: The Bureau, based on new information that may be available at the time of its meeting, review the state of conservation of Ichkeul and make appropriate recommendations for the consideration of the Committee.

Yellowstone National Park (United States of America)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1978

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1995.

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee learnt of several remedial actions taken by the State Party to minimize potential and ascertained threats to this site, and commended the President of the country for his efforts to fully remove the potential mining threat to the integrity of the Site with a mutually, to-be-agreed upon trade of land, valued at US\$ 65 million. Since then, the Montana State Office of the Bureau of Land Management of the United States Department of the Interior, and the Northern Region Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture have published a summary, and the full Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed Cooke City Area Mineral Withdrawal and have circulated it inviting any person or group to comment on the Draft EIS

during the 45-day public comment period (7 March - 28 April, 1997). The Centre has received both the summary and the full Draft EIS, together with a one-page reader's guide and a covering letter, copies of all of which have been transmitted to IUCN for review.

Decision required: The Bureau may wish to adopt the following:

"The Bureau recommends that the Committee in consultation with IUCN and the State Party and based on its review of the state of conservation report due from the State Party by 15 September 1997, determine whether actions taken to mitigate potential and ascertained threats to Yellowstone are adequate and whether or not Yellowstone should be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger."

Virunga National Park (Zaire)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1979

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1994.

Garamba National Park (Zaire)

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1980

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1996.

Since the conclusion of the last session of the Committee (Merida, 1996), Eastern Zaire has become destabilized and military conflict appears to continue spreading to other parts of the country. IUCN has received reports that indicate that in both these World Heritage Sites in Danger, infrastructure had been destroyed and wildlife populations decimated. IUCN and the Centre continue to maintain contacts with UNHCR and other concerned agencies and will provide up-to-date reports on both Virunga and Garamba, at the time of the Bureau meeting.

Decision required: The Bureau may wish to adopt the following:

"The Bureau joins the international community in calling for peace in Zaire and in voicing its serious concerns over the impacts of armed conflicts in Eastern Zaire on World Heritage Sites located there.. The Bureau recommends that the Committee retain Virunga and Garamba in the List of World Heritage in Danger."

Given the uncertain situation in Zaire, the Bureau may treat the Virunga and Garamba National Parks as exceptional cases and consider setting aside a sum of US\$ 75,000 as emergency assistance from the World Heritage Fund to enable the Centre and IUCN to plan, as soon as conditions permit, a mission to assess their state of conservation, prepare rehabilitation plans and implement actions that would address livelihood needs of people resident near those sites.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

7. Nine cultural properties are inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Reports on five of them were examined by the Committee during its twentieth session. Subsequently,

the Committee's recommendations and observations were transmitted to the States Parties concerned. New information is available on two properties. Reports on all properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-first session.

Angkor, Cambodia

Inscription on the World Heritage List: 1992

List of World Heritage in Danger: 1992.

1. Protection against theft and looting

Since 1992, numerous activities have been organized to protect the site of Angkor against theft and looting, which are amongst the principal causes of degradation of the monuments of the site. These activities include the training of museum conservators, customs officials, police responsible for guarding the monuments, teachers, archaeological students, journalists and jurists. Public awareness-raising activities have been launched on television, in the written press and by means of posters. Amongst these actions, the success encountered, since its creation, of the "Heritage Police" should be mentioned. The International Standards Section of the Cultural Heritage Division of the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh has collaborated with the Cambodian authorities in 1994, in the launching of this "Heritage Police", and its training has since been taken over by the French Police authorities. It comprises a Heritage Police Bureau responsible for inventorying and checking the shops selling art objects; a National Central Office of Cambodia of the OIPC Interpol, and a special Commissariat. This special operational unit for the protection of the archaeological site of Angkor is under the authority of a police officer with a police force numbering 520. It essentially has a preventive safeguarding mission, and restricts looting of the monuments of Angkor. The Heritage Police have already succeeded in retrieving hundreds of objects stolen from the site of Angkor, in particular during the spectacular seizure in November 1996, of four traffickers in possession of several objects.

2. Legislation

The International Standards Section of the Cultural Heritage Division collaborated with the Cambodian authorities in the elaboration of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, voted by Parliament on 21 December 1995 and promulgated by His Royal Highness on 25 January 1996. In adopting this law, Cambodia conforms to the articles of the 1970 Convention on the means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. In doing so, it should be emphasized that Cambodia has thus adopted legislation which is one of the most complete and modern worldwide.

But the application of this Law requires the preparation and adoption of additional legislation, the establishment of appropriate administrative procedures and the training of staff responsible for its implementation, in order that essential administrative documents for its application may be established, such as authorization for digs, export licences, permission for trading activities, etc. The International Standards Section of the Cultural Heritage Division

is willing to pursue its collaboration with the Royal Government of Cambodia and assist in the active implementation of this Law. Cooperation has already begun on drafting additional application legislation concerning archaeological excavations.

Despite the improved security measures in Angkor, UNESCO continues to be preoccupied by press reports on large-scale and highly organized looting of cultural properties from Cambodia which have allegedly involved the dismantling of monuments for sale.

Decision required: The Bureau may wish to adopt the following text:

"The Bureau congratulated the Government of Cambodia and UNESCO for their efforts over the past years in the adoption of measures against illegal traffic of cultural property from Angkor. The Bureau, while commending the efforts of the Government and UNESCO, expressed deep concern over the continued looting and illegal excavation of cultural properties from Angkor and other archaeological sites in Cambodia, notably over press reports on the highly organized and sophisticated trade in antiquities, including the dismantling of monuments. The Bureau invited the Government of Cambodia to submit a report to the twenty-first session of the Committee on administrative mechanisms put into place for the enforcement of the legislation adopted for the prevention of illicit traffic in cultural property".

Bahla Fort (Oman)

Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987

Inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1988

During its twentieth session, the Committee was informed of the remarks and recommendations of the expert mission which visited the site in September 1996. The state of conservation of the site is a serious cause for concern. The Committee thanked the Omani authorities for having accepted the mission's recommendations, but however, requested to be kept regularly informed, through the World Heritage Centre, of progress achieved in the implementation of these measures. This had not been done by the Omani authorities, in spite of several requests for information by the Centre, until 12 and 24 March 1997, when it was confirmed that the measures recommended by the experts were being carried out and they requested that another expert mission be sent to the site. On 10 April, the Permanent Delegation informed the Centre that following heavy rains the north-west Tower of the Fort had collapsed.

Decision required: The Bureau may wish to adopt the following text:

"After having taken note of the report of the Secretariat concerning the situation at Fort Bahla, the Bureau thanked the Omani authorities for their communications of 12 and 24 March 1997 by which they confirmed their intent to carry out the recommendations of the UNESCO experts. However, it expressed its serious concern following the collapse of the Fort's north-west Tower and requested them to make every effort to consolidate the monument. It approved the dispatch of a new expert mission next October, on a cost-sharing basis, as previously."