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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

BUREAU OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Nineteenth session

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room X (Fontenoy)
3-8 July 1995

Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of
properties inscribed on the World Heritage List:

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BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS REPORT

At its eighteenth session in December 1994, the World Heritage Committee considered the scientific and technical problems raised by the state of conservation and rehabilitation of the cultural and natural heritage as defined in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 11 of the Convention and adopted the following principles:

1. Bearing in mind the provision of Article 4 of the Convention, under which each State Party recognized that the duty of ensuring the conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and situated on its territory belongs primarily to that State, the Committee is of the view that to this end the establishment of systematic monitoring, the day-to-day observation of the sites, in close collaboration with the site managers or the agency with management authority constitutes a meaningful, active and effective operational method capable of countering the dangers that may threaten its cultural and natural heritage.
2. Bearing in mind also the provisions of Article 6, which provides that "whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of the states on whose territory the cultural and natural heritage mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 is situated, and without prejudice to property rights provided by national legislation, the States Parties to this Convention recognize that such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to

cooperate" and Article 7, which provides that "for the purpose of this Convention, international protection of the world cultural and natural heritage shall be understood to mean the establishment of a system of international cooperation and assistance designed to support States Parties to the Convention in their efforts to conserve....that heritage", also in consideration of Articles 8, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26 and 29 paragraphs 2 and 3, and in pursuance of the intent of the Convention as reflected in the preambular clause 8 in "establishing 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 scientific methods", the World Heritage Committee invites the States Parties to present every five years a scientific report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage sites on their territories, and that, to this end, the States Parties may request expert advice from the Secretariat or the advisory bodies and that the Secretariat may also commission expert advice with the agreement of the States Parties.

3. The Committee defined **systematic monitoring and reporting** as the continuous process of observing the conditions of World Heritage sites with periodic reporting on its state of conservation.
4. The World Heritage Centre will synthesize the monitoring reports per region and present these to the World Heritage Committee for examination.
5. The Committee defined **reactive monitoring** as the reporting by the World Heritage Centre, other sectors of UNESCO and the advisory bodies to the Bureau and the Committee on the state of conservation of specific World Heritage sites that are under threat. The Committee also invited the States Parties to submit to the Committee, through the World Heritage Centre, specific reports and impact studies each time exceptional circumstances occur or work is undertaken which affect on the state of conservation of the site.

In order to implement these principles, the Committee requested the Secretariat to undertake a series of specific actions and it invited the Secretariat to report to the Bureau at its nineteenth session on their implementation. The actions requested by the Committee and the subsequent activities undertaken by the Secretariat are the following:

- (1) Prepare a **revised nomination format** for presentation to the nineteenth sessions of the Bureau and the Committee, so as to provide adequate baseline information at the time of inscription of properties on the World Heritage List.

- ad (1) The basic structure of a revised nomination format was already presented to the Bureau and the Committee at their eighteenth sessions. An annotated version is presented in Section A of this working document.
- (2) Develop a **format for monitoring reporting** as an aid to the States Parties and to facilitate the processing of the reports and the information contained in them through a computerized data base.
 - ad (2) Following the structure of the revised nomination format, a format for monitoring reporting has been prepared. This is presented in Section B of this working document.
- (3) Organize in early 1995, with the participation of the advisory bodies and other relevant institutions, a meeting of experts on **World Heritage Information Management**, in order to develop guidelines for the establishment of a World Heritage Data Base.
 - ad (3) A consultative meeting was held with the advisory bodies (ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM), the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) and individual experts to draw up the terms of reference for an expert meeting on World Heritage Information Management. The expert meeting will be held at UNESCO Headquarters in the week of 25 September 1995. The World Heritage Centre, assisted by a working group of three experts, prepared the working document for this meeting which is made available to the Bureau as information document WHC-95/CONF.201/INF.5.
- (4) **Inform the States Parties** of the principles established by the Committee, invite them to put monitoring structures in place and to report on the state of conservation of the property to the Committee on a 5-year basis.
 - ad (4) The Secretariat informed the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention through a circular letter of the decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee. In this letter the Secretariat also informed them that, in due time, they will be approached on a regional basis to establish jointly the modalities of monitoring and reporting and to define which actions are required to facilitate the observance of the Committee's decisions.
- (5) Present to the nineteenth session of the Bureau an overall

work plan for the implementation of regional monitoring programmes so that States Parties will have sufficient time to prepare the state of conservation reports.

- ad (5) A draft work plan for the implementation of regional monitoring programmes and the examination of regional synthesis reports by the Committee is presented in Section C of this working document.
- (6) Prepare work plans for and implement **regional programmes** to provide advice and assistance to the States Parties in setting up adequate monitoring and management systems, to promote the preparation of 5-year state of conservation reports, to handle and analyze these reports and to present 5-year Regional State of the World Heritage Reports to the World Heritage Committee.
- ad (6) Detailed work plans for the implementation of each of the regional programmes will be prepared so as to meet the targets set in the overall work plan mentioned under ad (5) above.
- (7) Incorporate **monitoring as a management tool** in World Heritage training courses and other activities.
- ad (7) The Secretariat and other partners are taking several initiatives to promote monitoring as a management tool and to provide guidance to the States Parties and the site managers in putting day-to-day monitoring in place. The Bureau and the Committee will be informed as soon as possible of these initiatives.

The following sections of this working document present the annotated revised nomination format (Section A), a format for periodic World Heritage state of conservation reports (Section B), the work plan for the implementation of regional monitoring programmes and the examination of regional synthesis reports by the World Heritage Committee (Section C) and reports on the state of conservation of specific World Heritage sites that are under threat (Section D).