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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE
Twentieth session

Merida, Yucatan, Mexico
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**Item 14 of the Provisional Agenda: Implementation of the
Convention in the light of twenty-five years practice**

SUMMARY

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in 1997 is an opportunity to reflect on, and critically review the implementation of the Convention and to further promote World Heritage conservation.

The Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, meeting at UNESCO Headquarters in June 1996, suggested that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention be discussed by the Committee under two separate but interrelated agenda items - "**Implementation of the Convention in the light of twenty-five years practice**" (the subject of this document) and "**Promotional and educational activities, highlighting particularly the twenty-fifth anniversary events**" (see working document WHC-96/CONF.201/16).

This document includes three sections:

- I Review of the "Strategic Orientations for the Future" adopted by the sixteenth session of the World Heritage Committee in 1992
- II Summary of replies to the twenty-fifth anniversary Circular Letter received as of 23 October 1996
- III Future Directions

Decision required: The Committee may wish to request that the World Heritage Centre organize an international expert meeting, in association with the Advisory Bodies, to thoroughly review the implementation of the Convention and plan strategically for the future (see Section III).

Background

The General Conference of UNESCO adopted the Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage at its seventeenth session in Paris on the 16th of November 1972. 1997 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention.

The twenty-fifth anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on, and critically review the implementation of the Convention and to further promote World Heritage conservation. In acknowledging this fact, the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, meeting at UNESCO Headquarters in June this year, suggested that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention be discussed by the Committee under two separate but interrelated agenda items - **"Implementation of the Convention in the light of twenty-five years practice"** (the subject of this document) and **"Promotional and educational activities, highlighting particularly the twenty-fifth anniversary events"** (see working document WHC-96/CONF.201/16).

Section I provides a summary review of progress towards the fulfilment of the Goals and Objectives outlined in the "Strategic Orientations for the Future" adopted by the Committee at its sixteenth session on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 1992.

Section II presents a summary of the replies to the Circular Letter (WHC Circular Letter No. 6-96, dated 26 August 1996 entitled **The twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention**) which refer to the "Implementation of the Convention in light of twenty-five years practice" (with reference to the first section of the Circular Letter). The content of the replies to the Circular Letter which refer to "Promotional and educational activities, highlighting particularly the twenty-fifth anniversary events" (with reference to the second section of the Circular Letter) are summarized in working document WHC-96/CONF.201/16.

Section III suggests Future Directions.

I Review of the "Strategic Orientations for the Future" adopted by the sixteenth session of the World Heritage Committee, 1992

Introduction

The "Strategic Orientations" were adopted as a future strategy for the implementation of the Convention following an in-depth evaluation performed in 1991 and 1992, as requested by the

Committee at its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions in 1990 and 1991. 1997 is the appropriate occasion to review the "Strategic Orientations", with five years having passed since their development, and in light of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention. In summary, the Goals and Objectives outlined in the "Strategic Orientations" are:

Goal 1 *Promote completion of the identification of the world heritage*

Objectives Complete the global study and appropriate thematic studies

 Assist, where necessary, in identification of sites and preparation of nominations

Goal 2 *Ensure the continued representative credibility of the World Heritage List*

Objectives Maintain objective and consistent review and evaluation procedures

 Refine and update criteria for evaluation of natural/cultural heritage nominations

 Promote consideration for inscription from all geo/cultural regions of the world

 Consider situation of sites no longer qualifying for listing

Goal 3 *Promote the adequate protection and management of the World Heritage Sites*

Objectives Take specific steps to assist in strengthening site protection and management

 Take appropriate actions to address threats and damage to site

Goal 4 *Pursue more systematic monitoring of World Heritage sites*

Objectives Define elements and procedures for monitoring

 Cooperate with State Parties and competent authorities on regular monitoring work

Goal 5 *Increase public awareness, involvement and support*

Objectives Provide support to site presentation and interpretation

 Implement a professionally designed marketing strategy

 Attract donations and public support, including through demonstration of accountability in World Heritage Fund management

 Reinforce the image of a World Heritage Site network by introducing standards in the design and content of site programmes and general information materials

Compile and regularly distribute reports highlighting the success stories of the Convention

Encourage appropriate co-operation with local populations in promoting and protecting World Heritage sites

Provide support for circulation of exhibits on World Heritage sites among States Parties to the Convention

A summary review of progress towards the fulfilment of the Goals and Objectives outlined in the "Strategic Orientations" is presented below. The review has been prepared goal by goal, taking into account the various objectives and recommendations formulated in 1992.

Goal 1 Promote completion of the identification of the world heritage

1.1 Complete the global study and appropriate thematic studies

Meetings and thematic studies on the subject of cultural landscapes were held at La Petite Pierre, France in 1992 (to define categories of cultural landscapes and propose revisions to the cultural criteria) and in Schorfheide, Germany in 1993 (establishment of an Action Plan for Cultural Landscapes). In addition a number of regional thematic meetings on cultural landscapes have been held (Canals, in Montreal Canada and Routes and Itineraries in Spain in 1994, Rice Terraces of Asia in the Philippines in 1995, Associative Cultural Landscapes in Australia in 1995 and European Cultural Landscapes in Vienna, 1996). A meeting on cultural landscapes of the Andes is planned for 1997. A meeting on geological and fossil sites was held in Beijing, China in 1996. ICOMOS has organized or participated in more than ten comparative or thematic studies between 1992 and 1996 as reported in information document WHC-96/CONF.201/INF.11.

The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS organized, from 20 to 22 June 1994, an expert meeting which proposed the pursuance and the regeneration of the global study in the form of a constantly evolving and dynamic Global Strategy, with an anthropological and multidimensional concept of cultural heritage, and focusing on the regions, the types of properties and the periods under-represented on the List, in particular the heritage of living and/or traditional cultures. A series of sub-regional and thematic meetings was also proposed. These recommendations were adopted by the Committee at its 18th session at Phuket (December 1994), and two sub-regional meetings on the categories of African cultural properties, presently under-represented on the List (Harare, October 1995, and Addis Ababa, July-August 1996) have already been organized in this context.

1.2 Assist, where necessary, in identification of sites and preparation of nominations

Utilizing funds allocated by the Committee from the World Heritage Fund, and case by case approvals by the Chairperson, a considerable contribution to the establishment of tentative lists and preparation of nomination dossiers has been made.

The amount of preparatory assistance rose from US\$ 130,000 in 1993 to US\$ 150,000 in 1994 and 1995, and US\$ 175,000 in 1996. More than 160 nominations of cultural and natural properties were submitted to the Committee from 1993 to 1996 inclusive. The World Heritage List increased from 378 properties at the beginning of 1993 to 469 properties at the beginning of 1996.

In 1993, 60 of the 136 States Parties, had drawn up tentative lists. In September 1996, this number had increased to 95 of the 147 States Parties, of which 67 of the lists are in conformity with the prescriptions for the preparation of tentative lists outlined in the Operational Guidelines. However, it should be noted that since 1 October 1995, the requirements as to the form and content of the tentative lists of cultural properties have been reinforced (decision of the seventeenth session of the Committee, December 1993) and that a number of lists which had previously been considered as meeting the requirements of the Operational Guidelines no longer comply with the Guidelines. A group of experts meeting in the Parc National de la Vanoise recently proposed that the obligatory requirement of a tentative list be extended to natural properties as well (to facilitate comparative analyses and to harmonize the natural heritage assessment process with the process for cultural heritage).

Goal 2 Ensure the continued representative credibility of the World Heritage List

2.1 Maintain objective and consistent review and evaluation procedures

This objective concerns the Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS and IUCN) charged with evaluating the properties proposed for inscription. It is well recognised that the Advisory Bodies need to ensure consistency in their evaluations and, it should be noted that at the occasion of several working meetings, the Centre and its partners established several principles to improve these evaluation procedures and ensure greater rigour.

Expert missions are now sent to each of the nominated properties to examine integrity/authenticity, legislative and

administrative protection. The assessment of the "outstanding universal value" of the nominated properties is undertaken by the expert panels of the Advisory Bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN.

The need for sound baseline information on World Heritage properties is essential during the evaluation process. For this reason the proposed revised nomination form has been developed in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies (see working document WHC-96/CONF.201/6B).

2.2 Refine and update criteria for evaluation of natural/cultural heritage nominations

The natural and cultural heritage criteria have been periodically updated by the Committee, notably in accordance with the proposals of the expert meetings on the Global Strategy and thematic studies.

Thus, new concepts such as cultural landscapes, industrial heritage, the heritage of living cultures, the cross-cultural exchanges, routes and itineraries, have been introduced in the Operational Guidelines, whilst the notion of authenticity was broadened, following the Conference held in Nara, Japan in 1994, to take into consideration of the different meanings and understanding of this concept for different cultures of the world.

An Expert Meeting on Evaluation of General Principles and criteria for nominations of natural World Heritage sites, as requested by the nineteenth session of the World Heritage Committee in 1995, was held in the Parc National de la Vanoise in France in 1996.

In general, considerable progress has been made in updating the concept of World Heritage in light of modern research, thinking and understanding about the definition, meaning and values of heritage. In addition progress has been made in applying the criteria in specific regional and sub-regional contexts (for example in Africa, with the intention to develop tentative lists, and in the Asia-Pacific region with regard to utilising the associative cultural landscape category and the cultural and natural criteria).

2.3 Promote consideration for inscription from all geo/cultural regions of the world

This point is closely linked to Goal 1 above. The main objectives of the Global Strategy and its sub-regional meetings, as well as of the thematic studies, are to promote the establishment of tentative lists of cultural and natural

heritage and proposals for the inscription of properties of the different geo-cultural zones of the world. In view of the amount of time required to draw up lists and prepare the nomination dossiers, it is still too early to evaluate the results. However, as a first result of the Global Strategy and the first sub-regional meeting held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in October 1995, out of the 35 African States Parties, 9 tentative lists have been received and 9 others are being finalized.

In summary, however, taking into account the provenance of the nominations received between 1993 and 1996, the regional imbalances have not diminished.

2.4 Consider situation of sites no longer qualifying for listing

The procedure for the eventual deletion of properties from the World Heritage List is described in Paragraphs 46 to 56 of the Operational Guidelines. To date, no property has been removed from the World Heritage List.

Goal 3 Promote the adequate protection and management of the World Heritage Sites

3.1 Take specific steps to assist in strengthening site protection and management

Since 1992 a number of guiding documents for the protection and management of World Heritage sites have been prepared. These include the *Management Guidelines for World Heritage Cultural Sites* published by ICCROM in association with UNESCO and ICOMOS, guidelines on risk preparedness in preparation by ICOMOS and guidelines for the recording and documentation of cultural World Heritage sites to be published by ICCROM in 1997.

Strengthening links with other environmental conservation conventions and treaties has been identified as a way of strengthening the protection and management of World Heritage sites. The Centre is exploring ways such cooperation may be more effectively accomplished.

A Training Strategy for natural World Heritage has been developed and was adopted by the Committee at its nineteenth session in 1995. It is hoped that training in World Heritage cultural and natural site conservation (identification, protection, preservation, rehabilitation etc) will establish a new code of conduct and a heightened level of preparedness with regard to World Heritage conservation (see working document WHC-96/CONF.201/12). With regard to requests for international assistance it is to be noted that increasingly requests are for

training activities rather than other more specific site protection and management activities.

The protection and management of World Heritage sites will be further strengthened by increasing public awareness of the values of World Heritage sites and of the importance of conserving World Heritage sites. Over the last few years significant investment and progress has been made in developing information materials for this specific purpose (see Goal 5 below).

Continuing experience in the conservation of World Heritage cultural and natural properties is demonstrating that a well planned combination of funding, legislative protection and management planning plus public support is required to ensure the protection and management of World Heritage values. It is acknowledged that further international assistance is required to ensure the adequate legal protection of cultural and natural heritage. UNESCO has in recent years provided such support for the development of cultural heritage protection legislation in Cambodia and Romania. Furthermore, there are still many instances where although legal protection exists, no enforcement is conducted at the national level whether due to lack of financial or public support. This situation highlights the urgent need for a systematic review of national legislation to protect World Heritage sites and to establish mechanisms to ensure enforcement of, and support for, heritage protection legislation. Whilst institutional support and protection often exists for National Parks (the main protected area category of most natural World Heritage sites), often no such support and protection exists for cultural sites. It is acknowledged however that some sites, both natural and cultural, are protected by alternative systems of protection, including customary and traditional law.

3.2 Take appropriate actions to address threats and damage to sites

One of the most important protective mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention is the List of World Heritage in Danger. Paragraphs 77 to 81 of the Operational Guidelines outline the criteria for the inclusion of cultural and natural properties in the List of World Heritage in Danger according to ascertained and potential dangers or threats. The inclusion of properties in the List of World Heritage in Danger is intended to raise awareness of, and highlight the need for, urgent attention to be given to the conservation of these properties. It is important that this fundamental protective mechanism of the Convention be utilised to its fullest extent to assist in the safeguarding of World Heritage.

There are currently 18 properties included in the List of World Heritage in Danger. Since 1992, ten of these properties have been added to the List of World Heritage in Danger. Further analysis of the World Heritage in Danger List reveals that four of the cultural and natural properties on the List have been in Danger for more than a decade. Whilst some sites are in Danger because of what might be regarded as short term threats (for example civil disturbance), other more long term inclusions reflect severe ecological deterioration in the case of a number of natural properties and extremely poor state of conservation in the case of some cultural properties due to the fragility of their fabric and the severity of the physical environment in which they exist. The Operational Guidelines call for the Committee to develop, and adopt as far as possible, in consultation with the States Party concerned, a programme for corrective measures for properties in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Over the last several years, an increased number of state of conservation reports have been prepared on an ad-hoc or reactive basis, in response to reported threats to World Heritage properties and in accordance with paragraphs 48-50 and 82-89 of the Operational Guidelines. More than forty reports are examined by the Committee and the Bureau each year. Their recommendations, in many cases, have contributed to decisive actions by the States Parties for the preservation of World Heritage properties.

In summary, the overall situation with regard to the protection and management of World Heritage sites has not markedly improved over recent years. Indeed with a growing number of sites on the World Heritage List, and improved methods of communication between sites and the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies there appear to be an increasing number of problems at sites that are of a scale not previously encountered. In particular the threats to World Heritage properties caused by civil war situations have increased. In order to respond better to conservation emergencies at World Heritage properties, the Committee has established a Special Emergency Reserve. More specifically, the World Heritage Centre and other UNESCO Sectors have undertaken safeguarding actions to provide emergency assistance in Mostar (Bosnia), Dubrovnik, Plitvice National Park (Croatia), Garamba (Zaire) and Angkor (Cambodia).

Goal 4 Pursue more systematic monitoring of World Heritage sites

4.1 Define elements and procedures for monitoring

Monitoring the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List has been discussed since 1982 at several of the sessions of the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau and in consultations with the Advisory Bodies, expert groups and States Parties. In 1992, the Committee again recognized the need for updated and credible information on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. The 1992 recommendations relate monitoring particularly to the implementation of the Committee's recommendations made at the time of inscription of the property, to the provision of assistance from the World Heritage Fund and the keeping up-to-date of the World Heritage List.

As requested by the Committee, an expert meeting was held in November 1993 "in order to strengthen the guidelines and procedures for systematic and continuous monitoring of the state of conservation of World Heritage Sites". The report of this expert meeting was brought to the attention of the Committee at its seventeenth session and led to the adoption by the Committee at its eighteenth session of a chapter on monitoring and reporting for inclusion in the Operational Guidelines. The essence of the Committee's decision was that 'monitoring', the continuous process of observing the conditions of World Heritage sites, should be considered to be the responsibility of the State Party concerned, and that States Parties were requested to report its results periodically to the Committee.

At the time, the Committee considered monitoring and reporting to be of a technical nature and necessary for it to undertake its responsibilities as defined in the World Heritage Convention, such as the keeping up-to-date of the World Heritage List and the provision of international assistance under the World Heritage Fund.

However, further discussions on monitoring and reporting took place at the Tenth General Assembly of States Parties and the nineteenth session of the Committee which led to the conclusion that reporting on the state of conservation should be considered in relation to Article 29 of the Convention which refers to States Parties providing information on their legislative and administrative provisions for cultural and natural heritage conservation. The Eleventh General Assembly and the 29th General Conference of UNESCO, both to be held in 1997, will decide whether to request the World Heritage Committee to define the periodicity, form, nature and extent of a regular reporting

by the States Parties on the application of the World Heritage Convention including the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties, as well as to respond to these reports.

The Committee also decided, at its eighteenth session in 1994, that, in order to facilitate monitoring and reporting, the nomination form should be revised to ensure that baseline information on the values, state of conservation and protective mechanisms is acquired at the time of nomination. It is envisaged that this baseline information will form the basis of monitoring. A draft of such a form was developed by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies and submitted to the Committee at its nineteenth session in 1995 and through a Circular Letter to all States Parties to the Convention. A revised draft of the nomination form will be submitted to the Committee at its twentieth session for consideration.

4.2 Cooperate with States Parties and competent authorities on regular monitoring work

In 1992, at its sixteenth session, the Committee introduced a budget line for activities related to monitoring to be supported under the World Heritage Fund. Since then, funds have been allocated for the organization of an expert meeting on monitoring in 1993 (referred to above) and for the further development of the methodology of monitoring and reporting, such as the preparation of guidelines for the recording and documentation of cultural World Heritage sites, to be published by ICCROM in 1997.

However, in accordance with the Committee's decisions, the greatest part of the funds for monitoring, have been utilized to organize regional and sub-regional seminars of site managers and to cooperate with States Parties in the preparation of substantive state of conservation reports. These reports have been submitted to the World Heritage Committee and the Bureau as appropriate, and in many cases formed the basis for the examination of requests for international assistance under the World Heritage Fund.

As requested by the Committee at its sixteenth session reports on the state of conservation of all Latin American cultural World Heritage properties were prepared and submitted to the Committee from 1992 to 1994. A regional summary report was presented to the Committee at its eighteenth session in 1994.

The increased awareness among States Parties of the need to observe and document the state of conservation of cultural and natural properties is becoming evident through the great number of States Parties' initiatives to prepare state of conservation

reports. Such reports have been, or are being, prepared by Australia, Bulgaria, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Nordic World Heritage Office, amongst others. In many cases collaboration has been sought from the Advisory Bodies.

In summary, monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage properties has developed considerably but lags somewhat behind expectations with respect to the development of a systematic approach.

Goal 5 Increase public awareness, involvement and support

Although unforeseen even just a few years ago, the demand for World Heritage education, the Internet, the World Heritage Information Network (WHIN) and mass media and publishing activities have proven to be considerable with even greater potential to be explored to increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage conservation around the world by reaching diverse and huge audiences. The increase in public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage may be quantified with reference to the 12,000 enquiries made to the World Heritage web server in August 1996 alone.

5.1 Provide support to site presentation and interpretation

Information materials (Information Kit, Brochure, Diary, Map etc) about World Heritage sites and World Heritage conservation have been made available to site managers to assist in site presentation and interpretation. This activity will continue in 1997 and in future years. A special budgetary appropriation to respond to States Parties requests for support with site presentation and interpretation for 1997, the 25th Anniversary year is proposed in working document WHC-96/CONF.201/16.

5.2 Implement a professionally designed marketing strategy

A plan for marketing and fund-raising was presented to the eighteenth session of the Committee in 1994 but was not supported by the Committee (see Report of the Rapporteur WHC-94/CONF.003/16).

A growing portfolio of information about World Heritage and World Heritage conservation is now available in a number of formats and media. In response to ever increasing demands for information about World Heritage and World Heritage conservation a more systematic approach to World Heritage documentation, information and education including greater presence on the Internet and mass media and publishing co-productions has been

developed for 1997 and future years (see working document WHC-96/CONF.201/16).

5.3 Attract donations and public support, including through demonstration of accountability in World Heritage Fund management

Donations and financial support for World Heritage activities have been received from a number of sources including Rhône-Poulenc (sponsor of the special project Young People's Participation in World Heritage Preservation and Promotion since 1994), the American Express Company and Foundation (grants for three regional publications - *World Heritage: Ours Forever? - Treasures of Asia and the Pacific*, *China's World Heritage* and *Cities of Asia-Heritage for the Future*) and most recently from the Republic of Korea for support for the World Heritage Documentation Unit. The German Environment Foundation generously provided a grant of US\$100,000 for the meeting on cultural landscapes held in Germany in 1993, and the publication of the book *Cultural Landscapes of Universal Value*.

Collaborative agreements between UNESCO, the World Heritage Centre and the media and publishers include considerable support for the production of television, video and publications about World Heritage by these companies. By explaining how to make contributions to the World Heritage Fund, these productions have the potential to attract considerable public and private support for World Heritage conservation.

Fund-raising activities of the World Heritage Centre could be reinforced if a proactive approach was adopted and a professional trained in this specific activity was made available to the Centre.

Reinforce the image of a World Heritage Site network by introducing standards in the design and content of site programs and general information materials

An ever increasing amount of information about World Heritage sites and their conservation is being made available to World Heritage sites. The *World Heritage Newsletter* relaunched in hard copy and on the Internet, and the World Heritage Information Network (WHIN) are intended to generate enhanced communication with World Heritage sites and their managers. Enhanced, immediate communication, now possible with many World Heritage site managers will in future years facilitate the introduction of standards in the design and content of site programs and information materials made available at sites.

The presentation of plaques to commemorate the inclusion of properties in the World Heritage List are intended to inform those visiting such properties that it has a particular value recognized by the international community. Over the last few years these ceremonies to celebrate the installation of plaques have received a lot of media coverage whilst reinforcing an image of their being a network of World Heritage sites. A Circular Letter concerning the production and presentation of World Heritage plaques was sent to all World Heritage site managers in 1996 and additional guidelines on this subject are being made available on the Internet and from the World Heritage Centre on request.

In 1996 the first regional workshop for World Heritage Managers in South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the West Pacific was convened in Queensland, Australia (see information document WHC-96/CONF.201/INF.12). The resultant Regional Network for Management of World Heritage, along with the Nordic World Heritage Network established in 1995, are two recent and tangible expressions of a growing World Heritage site network.

Compile and regularly distribute reports highlighting the success stories of the Convention

Reports highlighting the success stories of the Convention have been included in the *World Heritage Newsletter*, the new *World Heritage Review* and in the World Heritage Information Kit distributed in 1996. The preparation of regional monitoring reports and the proposed *State of the World Heritage Report* from 1997 onwards (see working document WHC-96/CONF.201/16) will also continue to fulfil this objective.

Encourage appropriate co-operation with local populations in promoting and protecting World Heritage sites

Importantly, in 1995, at its nineteenth session, the Committee revised the text of Paragraph 14 of the Operational Guidelines to state that "Participation of local people in the nomination process is essential to make them feel a shared responsibility with the State Party in the maintenance of the site". With specific reference to the nomination of cultural landscapes, Paragraph 41 of the Operational Guidelines states that "nominations should be prepared in collaboration with and the full approval of local communities". These references are further supplemented by reference in Paragraph 24 (b) (ii) to "traditional protection", that is, the protection of a place by local people according to long held customs and beliefs.

Local populations, local authorities and regional fora continue to be focal points for co-operation in promoting, protecting and

presenting World Heritage sites. In order to reach out to young people, secondary schools and school teachers, one international and two regional World Heritage Youth Fora have been convened in the last eighteen months, and a number of others are planned for 1997 and 1998.

In Asia an initiative to safeguard and develop cities has begun with the co-operation of local authorities. For the Asia and Pacific region the Centre had been participating in the Tourism Working Group of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) and succeeded in the adoption by the Summit Meeting held in Osaka, Japan in 1995 of World Heritage conservation and development in the action plan of APEC.

Provide support for circulation of exhibits on World Heritage sites among States Parties to the Convention

Since 1992 a number of exhibits on World Heritage have been produced and circulated amongst States Parties. The high cost, limited audiences and relative lack of durability of fixed-panel exhibitions in the past has led to the need to seek out other less costly, quickly produced, durable and more easily transportable exhibitions for future years. In 1996 an exhibition, composed of 21 lightweight panels, entitled *Africa Revisited* was prepared by the World Heritage Centre with voluntary input from African and international experts. The exhibition presents the diversity and fragility of African heritage and is meant to help raise the awareness of the general public about African heritage. The exhibition can also be seen on the Internet. For the 25th Anniversary of the Convention, the production of basic information and visual materials suitable for adaptation at sites is proposed.

II Summary of replies to the 25th Anniversary Circular Letter received as of 29 October 1996

A Circular Letter (WHC Circular Letter No. 6-96, dated 26 August 1996) entitled **The twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention** has been sent to all Permanent Delegations and Observer Missions of all States Parties to the Convention, to all national Commissions for UNESCO of States Parties to the Convention, to all UNESCO Regional Offices and UNESCO Representatives, Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee and authorities responsible for the management of World Heritage properties.

To date a total of 29 replies to the Circular Letter have been received. Responses to the Circular Letter may be categorised according to the two sections of the letter - "Implementation of the Convention in light of twenty-five years practice" (with

reference to the first section of the Circular Letter) and "Promotional and educational activities, highlighting particularly the twenty-fifth anniversary events" (with reference to the second section of the Circular Letter). The 29 replies were received from:

- **12 States Parties to the Convention** (Republic of Benin; the Ministry of Culture, Republic of Cuba; Department of Antiquities, Ministry of Communications and Works, Republic of Cyprus; Archaeological Survey of India; Republic of Indonesia, Lebanon, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Poland; San Marino; and the National Heritage Conservation Commission, Zambia).
- **11 World Heritage site managers** (Ouro Preto, Brazil; Mountain District, Department of Canadian Heritage, Alberta, Canada on behalf of the Canadian Rockies World Heritage site; Zhoukoudian Peking Man Site, China; Telc, Czech Republic; Chambord, France; Church of Saint-Savin sur Gartempe, France; Royal Saltworks of Arc-et-Senans, France; Banska Stiavnica, Slovak Republic; Altamira, Spain; Bern, Switzerland; and, Fountains Abbey, United Kingdom);
- Büro für Internationale Kulturprojekte, Vienna, Austria; Escola Estadual, Belo Horizonte, Brazil; and, The City of Montauban, France; and,
- IUCN (with additional comments from IUCN, ICCROM and ICOMOS, presented as part of the report of the Meeting of the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre held at IUCN Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland on 27 September - see working document WHC-96/CONF.201/11 Annex D).

This document includes a summary of the replies to the Circular Letter which refer to the "Implementation of the Convention in light of twenty-five years practice". The content of the replies to the Circular Letter which refer to "Promotional and educational activities, highlighting particularly the twenty-fifth anniversary events" are summarised in working document WHC-96/CONF.201/16.

The replies relating to the implementation of the Convention may be summarised as highlighting the following comments and suggesting the following actions:

- critically examine the effectiveness of the Convention as a conservation tool by asking the question - **What difference has inscription in the World Heritage List actually made to the state of conservation of sites?**;
- evaluate the use, effectiveness and achievement of World Heritage in Danger listing;
- tentative lists are useful tools in the identification of cultural and natural heritage of "outstanding universal value";
- in some countries, particularly developing countries, heritage conservation may, by practical necessity, be a low priority and/or heritage of "outstanding universal value" may no longer exist. As a result imbalances in the representation of heritage from the developed and non-developed worlds are evident in the composition of the World Heritage List;
- striking regional imbalances are evident in the World Heritage List (for example, African heritage is poorly represented);
- evaluation of nominations of heritage for inclusion in the World Heritage List must be performed with rigour and without undue reference to subjective concepts such as beauty and wonder;
- evaluation of nominations of heritage for inclusion in the World Heritage List must be performed with reference to the appropriate cultural and geographic context and should more greatly involve consultation with local experts;
- preparatory assistance (especially for the preparation of nominations) should be apportioned with respect to attempts to reducing imbalances identified in the composition of the World Heritage List;
- the threats to World Heritage demand the sensitive use of innovative, integrated and dynamic action that accommodate the socio-economic realities of sites and local populations;
- a global thematic review of natural heritage is suggested;
- greater integration with other heritage conservation programmes is suggested (for example with the World Monuments Fund);
- formulation of policies for World Heritage conservation which recognize Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) of cultural and natural heritage conservation as an integral part of national development are suggested;
- a scientific symposium on World Heritage (cultural and natural) conservation.

III Future Directions

The brief review of progress towards the fulfilment of the five main Goals and selected Objectives (see Section I above) was provided as background material to assist the Committee in its deliberations concerning this important agenda item.

In light of this brief review and of the comments to the Circular Letter (see Section II above) the Committee may wish to proceed with a review and evaluation of the *Convention's* performance, to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to recommend specific actions that would lead to improvements in the future.

In seeking to establish **future directions** for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, in light of twenty-five years practice, the Committee may wish to ask the World Heritage Centre to organize an international expert meeting to thoroughly **review, the implementation of the Convention** and plan strategically for the future.

The aim of such a review would be to seek ways of ensuring that the Convention not only realizes its full potential as envisioned in 1972, but is also able to address new challenges based on current situations and anticipated trends in the future.

Such a review might usefully include an assessment of the effectiveness of the Convention as a conservation tool, review of the Operational Guidelines, consider actions to redress well identified regional and sub-regional imbalances (for example Africa and the Pacific), investigate the rights and interests of indigenous peoples with regard to World Heritage properties, the economic value of World Heritage and tourism at World Heritage sites for example.

It should be noted that this review and evaluation process cannot be marked by a clear beginning and ending. On the contrary, the process should be maintained and improved, on a continuous basis.

The ultimate goal of reviewing the Convention is to develop a strategic plan for the years to come and thus to provide an overall framework which could guide States Parties and the international community in the implementation of the Convention.

An allocation of US \$40,000 for an "Overall evaluation of the 25 years implementation work and strategic planning" is included in the proposed workplan and budget for 1997 (see working document WHC-96/CONF.201/14C).

Decision required: The Committee may wish to request that the World Heritage Centre organize an international expert meeting, in association with the Advisory Bodies, to thoroughly review the implementation of the Convention, and plan strategically for the future.