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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Twentieth session
Merida, Yucatan, Mexico

2-7 December 1996

Item 18 of the Provisional Agenda: Amendment to the Rules of
Procedure of the World Heritage Committee

SUMMARY

This document is prepared in accordance with the decision of the Committee at its nineteenth session (Berlin, 4-9 December 1995). A proposal to ensure the continuing legality for the functioning of the Bureau following each General Assembly of States Parties until the election of the new Bureau is submitted herewith.

I. Introduction

At the Tenth General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 2 and 3 November 1995) and referring to item 10 of the Agenda, elections were held to replace the seven members of the World Heritage Committee whose term of office expired at the end of the 28th General Conference: Colombia, Indonesia, Oman, Peru, Senegal, Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand. The following were elected: Australia, Benin, Canada, Cuba, Ecuador, Malta and Morocco.

Certain members of the Bureau were represented by outgoing States Parties: Colombia, Oman, Senegal and Thailand. Whereas, the Rules of Procedure of the World Heritage Committee (rules concerning the Bureau of the Committee) in Rule 12.1, stipulate:

"The Committee, at the beginning of each ordinary session, shall elect a Chairman, five Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until the beginning of the next ordinary session, provided that the States which they represent remain members of the Committee."

Therefore, at its extraordinary session which preceded the nineteenth session of the World Heritage committee (Berlin, 4-9 December 1995) the composition of the Bureau was not in conformity with the Rules of Procedure (Rule 12.1). The quorum required in Rule 17 could not be obtained.

II. Decision of the Committee at its nineteenth session

In view of this situation, and at the request of the Delegate of Italy, the Committee decided to include in the provisional agenda of the twentieth session of the World Heritage Committee, an item on how to ensure the orderly replacement of the outgoing Bureau by the newly-elected Bureau, following each General Assembly of States Parties.

Consequently, the Secretariat requested the advice of the UNESCO Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs in order to avoid a repetition of the situation of the extraordinary session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee on 1 and 2 December 1995, when several States members of the Bureau had not been re-elected members of the Committee and therefore could no longer participate as members of the Bureau.

III Proposals

The Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs proposed two solutions which are set out below for consideration and decision of the Committee:

Proposal A:

When its December session precedes the year when the General Assembly will be held, the Committee will decide to meet very briefly in an extraordinary session at the end of the General Assembly in order to elect its new Bureau, so that this Bureau can meet the following month, prior to the Committee, in all legality.

Proposal B:

Another solution would be to modify the Rules of Procedure of the Committee by replacing in Rule 12.1, the last part of the sentence: "*..provided that the States which they represent remain members of the Committee*"

by

"provided that the States which they represent remain Parties to the Convention".

DECISION

Consequently, the World Heritage Committee is requested to choose one of the two solutions proposed by the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs.