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CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION
DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL, CULTUREL ET NATUREL

BUREAU DU COMITE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

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Point 3 de l'ordre du jour provisoire : Rapport sur les
activités entreprises par le Secrétariat depuis la vingtième
session du Comité

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda : Report on the activities
undertaken by the Secretariat since the twentieth session of
the Committee

1. Introduction

This document provides a summary of the main activities carried out by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre since the 20th session of the World Heritage Committee in December 1996. This summary report is supplemented by the oral report of the Secretary to be presented to the Bureau and by the other Working and Information Documents in the series WHC-97/CONF.204.

Included as Annex I to this report is an extract of the 29 C/5 « Draft Programme and Budget 1998-1999 » to be presented to the twenty-ninth session of the General Conference in October/November 1997. The extract shows Programme III.1.2. « Promotion of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage ».

2. New States Parties

Since the twentieth session of the World Heritage Committee in December 1996, Papua New Guinea has become a State Party to the Convention and, through the process of succession, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia became the 149th State Party to the Convention.

3. The Global Strategy

Several recent initiatives, aimed at furthering the Global Strategy for a representative World Heritage List have taken place or are being prepared.

Following the "World Heritage Session" organized at the International Geological Congress in Beijing, China, from 5-9 August 1996, the Committee made specific recommendations concerning the identification, evaluation and review of geological and fossil site nominations and encouraged States Parties to include such sites in their tentative lists. In January 1997, the Committee's recommendations were transmitted to the International Union for Geological Sciences (IUGS) and presented to the annual session of the International Geological Correlation Programme (IGCP). Both IUGS and IGCP have expressed their readiness to help States Parties to identify geological sites of potential World Heritage and assist IUCN missions to evaluate geological site nominations.

Following the Expert Meeting on "Evaluation of general principles and criteria for nominations of natural World Heritage sites" (the Vanoise meeting, March 1996), the Committee, at its twentieth session in Mérida, (Mexico, December 1996), approved funds for the organization of a meeting of natural and cultural heritage experts aimed at improving the harmony between the implementation of the

natural and cultural parts of the Convention. Preparations for this meeting have commenced.

Le Centre, avec la collaboration de l'ICOMOS, a également entrepris des consultations d'universitaires et de chercheurs scientifiques spécialistes de la région du Pacifique pour préparer la 3ème réunion de Stratégie globale, qui se tiendra à Suva (Fidji), du 15 au 18 juillet prochain. Des experts internationaux et nationaux de 12 Etats parties ou non encore parties de la région et d'organisations régionales y ont été invités; ils identifieront les catégories de biens culturels présents dans la région susceptibles de faire l'objet de propositions d'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial (patrimoine archéologique et anciens établissements humains, lieux d'échanges économiques et cérémoniels, lieux d'origine et lieux liés à la navigation, paysages culturels et période de la colonisation...).

Cooperation with the Council of Europe has continued. The Centre made contributions to the draft legal text of the "European Landscape Convention" at a hearing in Strasbourg on 24 March 1997. The draft text envisages an agreement between the respective bodies responsible for the World Heritage Convention and the proposed "European Landscape Convention" in order to prepare and launch coordinated actions for landscape conservation in Europe. The conservation of World Heritage cultural landscapes continues to attract interest from several organizations. Meetings on this subject were held with Europa Nostra, the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and the World Monuments Fund (WMF).

4. Monitoring and reporting the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List

The World Heritage Committee and its Bureau, during its sessions held in Mérida (Mexico, November and December 1996), examined fourteen reports of the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and forty-one reports of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. The decisions and recommendations of the Committee and the Bureau were transmitted to the States Parties by the Centre. When appropriate, States Parties' responses were requested by 15 April 1997.

The Bureau will examine reports on properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and reports on

properties inscribed on the World Heritage List (see Documents WHC-97/CONF.204/2A and 2B).

Particular attention has been given by the Secretariat to World Heritage properties affected by civil unrest : the World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the archaeological site of Butrinti in Albania. The necessary coordination has taken place for rapid assessment missions for these properties as soon as the security situation permits.

5. Activities in the Regions

The information provided hereafter on World Heritage sites is further developed in the Working Document WHC-97/CONF.204/2A.

5.1 Africa

While two of the five World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Virunga and Garamba, have been included in the List of World Heritage in Danger, two other sites, namely Kahuzi Biega and Okapi have also suffered from the fighting in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. IUCN will provide more information on these four sites during the Bureau session.

In Ethiopia, the Regional Government in Bahir Dar has objected to the Committee's decision to include Simen National Park on the List of World Heritage in Danger, feeling that the decision had been taken without adequate consultation with them. In a letter dated 24 March 1997 to the Centre, the Head of the Bureau of Agriculture for the Bahir Dar Region has contested the Committee's decision, pointing to several conservation measures currently being implemented to improve the protection of the Park. The Ethiopian authorities have therefore postponed the technical workshop which was scheduled for 10-18 April, 1997 where rehabilitation measures for the Simen National Park were to be discussed.

In July 1996 the World Heritage Centre funded a mission to the Island of Mozambique. The findings of the mission were summarised in a report which not only reviews the present state of the conservation of the Island but proposes as well an immediate action plan for the rehabilitation of

the site which would integrate sustainable human development on the Island and its conservation. Following the recommendations of the report for a multi-donor UNESCO/UNDP project, a donor meeting of all potential donors in Mozambique is under preparation. UNDP has already granted US\$300,000 for the technical assistance to the project. In addition, a Finnish associate expert has been assigned to the project and is expected to begin work in the UNESCO office in Maputo in mid-July.

5.2 Arab States

Following the inclusion of Ichkeul National Park (Tunisia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention carried out a mission to the site in January/February 1997. A report is expected to be presented to the Bureau at this session.

The 4th Training Seminar on Natural Heritage in the Arab Region, held in Mehdia and Rabat from 5 to 16 May 1997 was organised by the Moroccan National Commission in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Division of Ecological Sciences and the UNESCO Cairo Office.

The seminar was attended by 30 World Heritage site, Biosphere Reserve and other protected area managers from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen, as well as international resource persons (including a number of universities in the region, IUCN and UNESCO).

Participants discussed priorities for natural heritage conservation in the Arab Region, among them Ichkeul National Park (Tunisia) which was included on the List of World Heritage in Danger in December 1996. The case study on Ichkeul outlined some of the key problems, such as the development of agriculture and other industries (including tourism) and increasing demands for freshwater.

A l'issue de discussions menées avec la Banque mondiale et les autorités marocaines, l'UNESCO a été chargée d'assurer le contrôle de la qualité scientifique et technique des activités patrimoniales prévues dans le cadre d'un important prêt de la Banque mondiale en faveur de la réhabilitation et de la restauration de la médina de Fès (Maroc). Cette coopération avec la Banque mondiale s'intègre dans une perspective plus large dans laquelle la Banque mondiale et l'UNESCO harmonisent leurs approches en faveur de la revitalisation de centres urbains historiques.

Par ailleurs, le Centre et la Division du patrimoine culturel sont intervenus auprès des autorités libanaises pour que soient revus l'implantation d'un grand marché aux poissons prévu dans le vieux port nord de Tyr (Liban) ainsi que le tracé d'une autoroute qui aurait irrémédiablement détruit plusieurs zones archéologiques importantes. Il est rappelé au Bureau que le site de Tyr doit faire très prochainement l'objet d'une campagne internationale de sauvegarde.

Le deuxième atelier régional sur la science et la technologie pour la préservation des sites du patrimoine mondial s'est tenu à Damas (République arabe syrienne), du 30 novembre au 4 décembre 1996. Il était organisé par le Bureau de l'UNESCO au Caire, la Direction des Antiquités de Syrie, le Centre du patrimoine mondial, l'INERIS, l'Ecole des Mines de Nancy (France) et l'Université du Caire. Il a associé environ 70 participants de la Syrie, de l'Egypte, de la Jordanie, du Liban et de la France. Les principaux thèmes en ont été l'état de conservation des sites du patrimoine mondial dans la région arabe, les approches intégrées de la restauration, les méthodes de documentation des sites, le suivi de l'état de conservation, les méthodes de consolidation, et les expériences nationales et locales. Cet atelier régional sera suivi par un projet-pilote de conservation/restauration dans la Citadelle de Damas pour les stagiaires. D'autres pays y seront également invités.

5.3 Asia and the Pacific

In India, the Ministry of Environment and Forests hosted the South Asia World Natural Heritage Site Managers Meeting in New Delhi and Keoladeo National Park (16-19 January, 1997). The information obtained through the meeting enabled the preparation of state of conservation reports on all eight World Natural Heritage sites of South Asia. These reports will be submitted to this session of the Bureau (Working Document WHC-97/CONF.204/2B). The Centre and the Ministry of Environment and Forests of India also undertook site visits to the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaziranga National Park, in Assam.

After nearly eight years of militancy of the Bodo people, a site visit to Manas included in the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1992 to assess its state of conservation was able to be arranged. The militancy peaked in 1992-93 and the site's infrastructure suffered considerable damage. Poaching gangs have taken advantage of

decrease in protection capacity. The wildlife population, particularly that of the greater one-horned rhinoceros, has been gravely reduced. Since 1993 however, measures have been taken to address the grievances of the Bodo people while the site staff has re-established its presence in most parts of Manas. A two-year infrastructure and ecosystem rehabilitation plan, estimated to cost US\$ 6 million has been prepared.

The reporting on the state of conservation of cultural properties in the Asia-Pacific Region has progressed. During the March mission of the World Heritage Centre to India, an agreement was reached with the Archaeological Survey of India which will prepare reports on the 16 World Heritage cultural properties in India. The Bangladeshi authorities have also agreed to the preparation of the reports on two of their cultural sites. It is hoped that by September 1997, the reporting on all cultural properties in the Asia and the Pacific Region inscribed prior to 1992 will have been completed.

Financing for cooperation projects in the Region is being secured by the Centre through agreements between the local authorities of Asia and the European Union (EU) countries for the safeguarding and development of World Heritage cities in Asia. Building on the experience of the cooperation between Luang Prabang (Laos) and Chinon (France), the Centre has facilitated cooperation between Hue (VietNam) and the « Communauté urbaine de Lille » (France); Bhaktapur and Patan of the Kathmandu Valley with Bath and Chester (U.K.). The Intramuros Commission which manages the Manila Intramuros where the World Heritage San Augustin Church (Philippines) is located, has requested the support of the Centre to find a suitable European partner under this EU programme. A draft project proposal has now been prepared.

Preparations are also underway for the organization of a Seminar for the Mayors of Historic Cities of China and the European Union expected to take place in April 1998 in China. This seminar will focus on the application of the World Heritage Convention in the safeguarding of the cultural properties inscribed in the World Heritage List or in the Tentative List of China. The European Union and the Government of France have both agreed in principle to co-finance this Seminar.

Finally, the Republics of Central Asia showed an increased interest in the work of the World Heritage Centre. Frequent contacts are being established on different aspects of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and

the Centre is contributing with the Sector for Communication of UNESCO to the preparation of a regional Internet Web site on cultural heritage of the countries of Central Asia.

5.4 Europe

The Nordic World Heritage Office (NWHO) assisted with a study on the identification of potential World Heritage sites in the Nordic Countries, recently published in a report « Nordic World Heritage »; this was initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The report focuses specifically on the identification of shortcomings in respect to the type of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List in the Nordic Countries and demonstrates a concrete example of an attempt to establish a balanced and representative World Heritage List. 21 sites in the Nordic Countries have been identified as possible World Heritage sites. This list is yet to be approved by the individual States Parties and it remains their responsibility to present these sites for nomination to the World Heritage List. The report also illustrates the incorporation of the World Heritage Convention into the Environmental Strategy for 1996-2000 developed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The NWHO is actively working to elaborate and enhance the collaboration with the various Nordic development agencies.

In connection with the rehabilitation of the Old Town of Vilnius in Lithuania the NWHO contributed financial assistance to the preparation of the International Investors and Donors Conference for the Old Town held in March 1997.

Furthermore, due to the limited funds available for preparatory assistance under the World Heritage Fund, the NWHO contributed financially to the preparatory assistance request presented by Latvia for the preparation of the nomination dossier of the Old Town of Riga.

The Centre provided inputs to a study on the identification of potential natural World Heritage sites in Europe. Among the activities still foreseen in Europe in 1997 are: a seminar on natural heritage in the Nordic countries, to be held in Iceland in August 1997; a seminar on natural heritage in Europe to be hosted by Germany in Rügen (Germany), in November 1997; a meeting of natural heritage site managers from Central and Eastern Europe in September 1997 in Hungary.

Plitvice Lakes National Park (Croatia), a World Heritage Site in Danger, continues to show improvements in its state of conservation. The Croatian authorities have taken several measures, such as extending the boundary of the site to cover the whole underground basin supplying water to the lakes and streams of Plitvice, training three Park staff on communication skills, and opening a road outside the north-east boundary of the Park in order to divert trucks currently crossing the Park. The Croatian authorities, as requested by the Committee, foresee submitting a state of conservation report by 15 September 1997 during the summer of 1997. If current future trends continue it may be possible for the Committee to consider removing this site from the List of World Heritage in Danger at its twenty-first session in December, 1997.

A one day meeting, organised by Friends of UNESCO on 26 February 1997, for site managers and representatives from World Heritage sites in the United Kingdom, English Heritage and ICOMOS UK offered a forum for discussion. This meeting clearly indicated that communication between the site representatives and responsible authorities vis à vis each other and the World Heritage Centre is essential. Similar contact and exchange of information is also desired on an international level. A seminar to be held on 21 October on « England's World Heritage » is being organized by English Heritage.

The archaeological site of Butrinti in Albania, an excellent example of a mixture of Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Illyrian and Venetian cultures, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1992, has suffered damage from looting as a result of the civil unrest in Albania. On 10 March 1997 a raid on the museum, located in a restored Venetian castle on the acropolis, was committed. Glass cases containing coins, statuettes and pottery were broken into and looted. The famous antique theatre mosaic depicting a woman among flowers and animals was also damaged. Furthermore, unexploded grenades are also believed to remain in the site.

A rapid assessment mission to Butrinti will be undertaken as soon as the security situation permits. All arrangements to field a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/Butrinti Foundation mission have been made.

Suite à l'adoption par les autorités municipales de Vilnius et le Gouvernement lituanien de la stratégie de revitalisation du Centre Historique de Vilnius, la Conférence internationale des bailleurs de fonds s'est tenue en février 1997. Organisée conjointement par la Lituanie et

l'UNESCO, cette conférence avait pour objectif de mettre en oeuvre les recommandations de la stratégie, notamment en ce qui concerne les structures institutionnelles et les mécanismes de financement pour la sauvegarde et la mise en valeur du centre historique.

Pour la gestion de la réhabilitation du centre historique, la conférence a préconisé la création de l'OTRA (Agence de Revitalisation de la Vieille Ville); pour appuyer cette nouvelle agence para-gouvernementale, un programme d'assistance technique conjoint UNESCO/ PNUD a été institué.

Pour le financement des infrastructures, divers mécanismes ont été mis en place, dont la création d'un fonds, l'inscription du projet de la Vieille Ville au budget national d'investissement, et l'engagement de négociations pour un financement international.

Parallèlement à la soumission d'un dossier de proposition d'inscription de la ville de Riga en vue de son inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, et à la demande du Gouvernement letton, un projet de sauvegarde et de mise en valeur du Centre Historique a été mis sur pied. Il s'agit d'une coopération lettone, française et danoise, sous l'égide de l'UNESCO.

Les objectifs de cette opération définis par le gouvernement letton, en collaboration avec les autorités municipales de Riga sont les suivants: la mise en valeur du centre médiéval, la reconquête des rives du fleuve Daugava, la solution des problèmes de transport et de circulation dans le centre historique, et la réhabilitation des maisons traditionnelles en bois.

Les phases préliminaires du projet sont en cours; une réunion inter-ministérielle est prévue pour novembre 1997, afin de discuter des orientations fondamentales de la mise en valeur du Centre Historique de Riga.

5.5 Latin America and the Carribean

The technical workshop on state of conservation of natural and mixed World Heritage sites of Latin America was organized during the First Latin American Parks Congress held in Santa Marta, Colombia, from 21-28 May, 1997. Reports on 17 natural or mixed sites in Latin America were presented to the workshop and summaries on selected sites will be presented to the Bureau. The Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, intends to be able to prepare a regional overview of the state of conservation of natural and mixed

World Heritage Sites in Latin America for the twenty first session of the Committee in Naples, Italy, in December, 1997.

Reports on the two Latin American natural sites so far included in the List of World Heritage in Danger, namely Sangay and Rio Platano will be provided to the Bureau by IUCN. In the case of the Galapagos Islands, some positive trends strengthening the protection of the site seem to have been put in place by the Government. By letter dated 30 April 1997, the Permanent Delegation of Ecuador to UNESCO provided the World Heritage Centre with a Report on the state of conservation of Galapagos Islands, together with an Emergency Executive Decree (WHC-97/CONF.204/INF.9). The Decree intends to stabilize the human population on the islands through effective migration control. The Fisheries Reserve in the surrounding marine areas has been declared a Biological Reserve, thereby investing the Galapagos National Park Service with the authority to patrol the marine areas. More details on the actions taken by the Government of Ecuador to strengthen conservation of Galapagos since the last session of the Committee will be provided in Working Document WHC-97/CONF.204/2B.

The Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) held its symposium and Directing Council meetings at UNESCO Headquarters from 7 to 11 April 1997. 1997 represents the 40th anniversary of the year that UNESCO sent a fact-finding mission (Drs. I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt and Robert Bowman, and the Life Magazine photographer Eisenstadt) to the Galapagos to determine the best way to support science and conservation there. This mission led to the formation of the CDF under the auspices of UNESCO, IUCN and the Government of Ecuador. The CDF meeting focused on the current situation and the state of conservation of the islands and possible projects to mitigate the threats to this World Heritage site.

Since the meetings of the directors of cultural heritage in Latin America (Cartagena, Colombia, 1995) and the Caribbean (St. Kitts, 1996), regional training activities have focused on collaboration with universities and training centres and support to courses for networking among site managers.

A training seminar for site managers of archaeological sites in Mesoamerica was held in Copan, Honduras from 3 to 7 February 1997. The seminar was supported by the World Heritage Fund, organised by the Institute for Anthropology and History of Honduras and attended by nineteen participants from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala,

Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama. The programme included a variety of issues related to the conservation and management of World Heritage sites, as well as the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The seminar showed the need for networking within the sub-region and that a direct communication between the site managers and UNESCO is essential to inform the site managers and involve them in the application of the Convention for UNESCO to obtain first hand information on the sites.

At the World Heritage in Danger site of Chan Chan in Peru, a Pan-American Course on the Conservation and Management of Earthen Architectural and Archaeological Heritage was held in late 1996. The course studied the conservation and management policies for the site and will contribute to future planning. Technical cooperation under the World Heritage Fund is foreseen for 1997 to strengthen the management structure. A comprehensive state of conservation report is expected from the Peruvian authorities by 15 September 1997 for examination by the Committee in December 1997.

6. Training

Several training activities for which the Bureau and the Committee approved funds in Mérida, Mexico, in December, 1996, have been implemented (for example the XIXth International Training Seminar organized by CATIE for Latin American Park Managers (March - April 1997) and the fourth Regional Training Course for Natural Heritage Specialists from the Arab Region (Morocco, May 1997). Plans for the organization of other approved activities, such as the training course on wetland conservation organized by the Wildlife Institute of India in Keoladeo National Park and World Heritage Site of India for South Asia (November, 1997), have been finalized. Individual fellowships for the training of natural heritage specialists have been provided to Francophone Africa (in Garoua College, Cameroon and ENGREF, France), Anglophone Africa (Mweka College, Tanzania), Latin America (Fort Collins, Colorado, USA), and Southeast Asia (Indonesian trainees in Australia, February, 1997). Malaysia benefited from the Fund for training three of its protected area personnel at a 3 month certificate course on wildlife and protected area management offered by the Wildlife Institute of India, during May - July, 1997.

In a renewed effort to implement the curriculum and training materials development aspects of the Strategic Action Plan for Training Specialists in Natural Heritage, approved by the Committee in Berlin, Germany, in December

1995, the Centre in cooperation with the Vice-Chair of IUCN/WCPA in South Asia foresees the organization of a planning meeting of all the Regional Training Centres (e.g. Garoua (Cameroon), Mweka (Tanzania), CATIE (Costa Rica) etc.) in early 1998. The Wildlife Institute of India and the Ministry of Environment and Forests of India have both indicated an interest in hosting such a meeting in the new campus of the Wildlife Institute of India, in Dehra Dun. The Meeting will aim to develop a plan for launching sub-regional level curriculum development and validation projects on protected area management.

7. Cooperation with Partners

Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed between IUCN and the Centre in 1996, cooperation and administrative procedures for implementation of contracts for IUCN's services have been streamlined and are progressing far more satisfactorily than in 1996. It is hoped that the trend will continue and further improve during the remaining months of 1997 and in the coming years. The Centre is happy to see IUCN's World Heritage Policy Panel becoming a regular event and values its participation in the Panel Meetings to discuss and resolve issues and problems of mutual concern. The Third Meeting of the Panel was held on 22 April 1997 and included participants from the Centre, ICOMOS, IUCN, WCMC and WCPA.

A meeting of the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre was held at ICCROM in Rome on 3 February 1997. Reports by each of the partners were presented and a detailed discussion concerning on-going cooperation took place.

The Centre had numerous contacts with the Secretariat of other Conventions dealing with biodiversity conservation; e.g. RAMSAR, CITES and Biodiversity Conventions. Opportunities for cooperative actions based on issues of mutual interest and site specific problems are being explored.

The Director of the Centre presented a paper on the Convention at the annual meeting of the Swiss Society for the Protection of Monuments at Langnau in Switzerland on 14 May 1997.

The World Heritage Centre will continue to offer its full cooperation to foster close links with the 1954 Hague Convention.

The preparation of an International Instrument for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (Underwater Convention) will be discussed at the forthcoming General Conference.

The World Heritage Centre together with ICOM is currently exploring the possibilities of collaboration on the issue of museums at World Heritage sites and the establishment of a network on this level.

A meeting took place between the Deputy Director-General of UNESCO and the President of Europa Nostra, HRH Prince Henrik of Denmark, in December 1996 to discuss the expansion of cooperation between the two organizations. A follow-up meeting between the Secretary-General of Europa Nostra and the Director of the World Heritage Centre, the Division of Cultural Heritage in the Sector of Culture took place in March 1997 to define future cooperation in specific fields of mutual interest, particularly regarding European cultural landscapes.

8. World Heritage information and documentation

With regard to the information and documentation activities since the Committee meeting held in Mérida in December 1996, the Centre has proceeded with the implementation of the workplan as approved by the Committee. Documents are now being sorted out for transfer to the UNESCO Archives while those of public interest are being duplicated for the UNESCO Library. The tentative lists and the nomination files are being digitized and indexed for easy retrieval, while the mailing list and the existing databases are being updated. The physical facilities of the Documentation Unit are also being improved to increase storage capacity for documents and their consultations by experts and other visitors.

The newly designed World Heritage Map is now available and the Brochure and new World Heritage Posters are expected to be printed in time for the Bureau meeting in June. The Information Kit has also been updated and reprinted as is the World Heritage Diary. Production of information material for different target groups, such as the tourism industry, local authorities, and the press and media are also underway, as well as the slide show kit and the exhibition on the World Heritage conservation process.

Preparations for the 25th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention have also been initiated. The inability to provide seed funds towards the organization of events to

mark the Anniversary has been a serious constraint in negotiating with potential partners. However, negotiations are currently underway with a number of leading international daily newspapers, weekly and monthly magazines for the publication of a special supplement or series of articles on the World Heritage Convention and the sites under its protection on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary.

The French Minister of Culture intends to launch special events at the 22 World Heritage sites in France on the occasion of the annual "Heritage Day" in France in September. It is hoped that other States Parties will also mark the 25th Anniversary of the Convention through events at their respective World Heritage sites.

Production of documentary film series on World Heritage by the German Consortium, the Japanese Tokyo Broadcasting Corporation and the Japanese national channel, NHK, are continuing and reaching millions of people in the weekly broadcasts of the films.

The first volumes of a World Heritage Encyclopedia are now being produced in German, Japanese and Spanish by the Verlaghaus Stuttgart, Kodansha and Plaza y Janes, respectively. The Centre has put a number of publishers from other countries in contact with them and negotiations are in progress for the publication of other language versions of the Encyclopedia.

The Centre's Internet Web site on World Heritage is also being enriched with more information (115 pages) and it is now servicing over 40,000 queries a month. Improvements to the Web site are currently being undertaken by a number of experts with the objective of reorganizing the site to make it more user-friendly. A special section for children and youth is being developed to facilitate their comprehension of the Convention and its functions.

Queries from the press and media continue to increase rapidly.

Efforts are being made, in cooperation with the UNESCO Publishing Office (UPO), to augment subscriptions to the quarterly World Heritage Review (two issues since December 1996) as well as to increase paid advertisements to finance the continued publication of the Review. On 21 May, an International World Heritage Photo Competition was launched by UNESCO (UPO and WHC) with the generous sponsorship of AGFA, Lufthansa/United Airlines and Hilton Hotels. In addition to raising awareness of the importance of World

Heritage sites and their conservation, the Photo Competition is expected to attract a substantial increase in subscriptions to the Review.

9 issues of the electronic version of the World Heritage Newsletter have been issued since December 1996. The electronic Newsletter reaches an audience of more than 500 people. In addition, 3 issues of the print version of the World Heritage Newsletter have been published and distributed since December 1996. The Newsletter which continues to be in high demand is printed in 12,000 copies (8,000 English, 4,000 French). The Newsletter is becoming an effective tool for cooperation among the managers of the World Heritage sites.

Ceremonies to unveil plaques at World Heritage sites continue to be popular events for States Parties. The Director-General of UNESCO and the Director of the World Heritage Centre have been pleased to attend a number of these ceremonies (e.g. Meknes in Morocco, Schonbrunn in Austria, Lednice-Valtice in the Czech Republic, Ravenna and Ferrara in Italy, etc.).

9. World Heritage Education

With the aim of introducing World Heritage Education into the school curricula, the six-year UNESCO Special Project *Young People's Participation in World Heritage Preservation and Promotion*, conducted by the World Heritage Centre and the Education Sector (Associated Schools Project (ASP) Unit), concentrates this year on the preparation of a World Heritage Education Kit. The Kit will take into account experiences shared by students and teachers at the three World Heritage Youth Fora held to date. It will be distributed world-wide for experimentation at ASP secondary schools in 1998.

As a follow-up to the European World Heritage Youth Forum, held in Dubrovnik in 1996, the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO is coordinating World Heritage Education activities in Europe, in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and the ASP Unit. Students from Europe are invited to Roros to participate in August 1997 in a restoration camp, prepared jointly by the Norwegian authorities and the Nordic World Heritage Office. The World Heritage Centre is particularly grateful for the continuous support of this project by Norway, which is leading to a five-year agreement with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). For the third consecutive

year significant financial assistance has also been received from the Rhône-Poulenc Foundation.

The Chinese authorities have kindly offered to host a World Heritage Youth Forum in 1997. Preparations for this Forum are underway.

It is envisaged that an International Youth Forum will be held in Japan in 1998.

10. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre

The secondment of Mr Rob Milne from the United States of America, as Senior Adviser to the Director of the Centre, ended in February 1997. In recognition of Mr Milne's outstanding commitment to World Heritage conservation, the Director-General awarded him with the Dubrovnik Medal.

The generous support of Austria (Mr P. Strasser), Denmark (Ms A. Zu Sayn-Wittgenstein), Japan (Ms J. Taniguchi) and Sweden (Ms M. Karlsson) in providing the Centre with Associate Experts is gratefully acknowledged.

At the twentieth session of the World Heritage Committee in Mérida, the Director-General of UNESCO reported that UNESCO would provide for 8 posts previously financed by the World Heritage Fund from the Regular Programme.

The oral report of the Director of the World Heritage Centre will include an update of the staff situation in the Centre.

11. Other matters

The Bureau of the Comptroller and the World Heritage Centre have provided the External Auditor with all the information they have requested for the financial audit of the Centre for 1996. At the time this information document was prepared, the audit had just been completed.

A report of the results of the audit will be submitted to the Bureau.