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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty first Session

Christchurch, New Zealand
23 June – 2 July 2007

**Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: Global Strategy: Evaluation of the
Cairns-Suzhou Decision**

Global Strategy: Evaluation of the Cairns-Suzhou Decision

SUMMARY

Following Decision **28 COM 13.1** (also known as the Cairns-Suzhou decision) (Suzhou, 2004), this document presents an overview of the evolution of the limits concerning nominations decided by the Committee, a proposal to amend the order of priority set up by the Cairns-Suzhou Decision and statistics concerning nominations submitted over recent years aimed at measuring the potential impact of such decision.

Draft Decision: 31 COM 10, see Point II

I. BACKGROUND

A. Description of the limits decided on nominations since Cairns, 2000.

1. Since its 24th session, (Cairns, 2000), the World Heritage Committee decided a series of measures aimed at: **a) improving the representativity** of the World Heritage List and **b) managing the workload** of the Committee, Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre. Originally, an overall limit of 30 new nominations and a limit of one new nomination per State Party (with exceptions for States Parties without properties on the World Heritage List) were established in an attempt to improve the geographic distribution of new nominations. At the 28th session of the Committee, (Suzhou, 2004) the limit per State Party was brought up to two nominations, “provided that at least one of such nominations concerns a natural property” (Point 17 of Decision **28 COM 13.1**). An overall annual limit on the number of nominations (see Table 1 below for the evolution of this limit through the years) was established on an interim basis to manage the workload of the Committee, Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre.
2. The table here below recapitulates the evolution of the limits decided by the Committee over the past seven years:

Table 1

Session / Year Decisions	Overall limit	Description of the limit	Description of the Exemptions	Limit per State Party	Description of the Exemptions
24 th session, 2000	30	New Nominations	Deferrals, Referrals, Extensions and Nominations on an Emergency Basis	1 New Nomination	States Parties with no sites on the List
25 th session, 2001	30	New Nominations	Deferrals, Referrals, Extensions, Nominations on an Emergency Basis + Transboundary/Transnational Nominations	1 New Nomination	States Parties with no sites on the List
27 th session, 2003 27 COM 14	40	New Nominations	Deferrals, Referrals, Extensions, Nominations on an Emergency Basis + Transboundary/Transnational Nominations	1 New Nomination	States Parties with no sites on the List
28 th session, 2004 28 COM 13.1	45	New Nominations, Deferrals, Referrals, Extensions, Nominations on an Emergency Basis + Transboundary/Transnational Nominations	Minor modifications to the boundaries	2 Nominations Provided that at least 1 concerns a natural property	
7 th Ex Com, 2004 7 EX COM 4B.1	45	New Nominations, Deferrals, Referrals, Extensions, Transboundary/Transnational Nominations	Nominations on an Emergency Basis + Minor modifications to the boundaries	2 Nominations Provided that at least 1 concerns a natural property	
29 th session, 2005 29 COM 18A	45	New Nominations, Deferrals, Referrals, Extensions, Transboundary/Transnational Nominations	Nominations on an Emergency Basis + Minor modifications to the boundaries	2 Nominations Provided that at least 1 concerns a natural property + Transboundary/Transnational Nominations (it counts only on 1 State Party's quota)	States Parties who participate in Transboundary/Transnational nominations submitted on another State Party's quota

B. Order of priorities set up in case the overall number of nominations submitted for a cycle is exceeding the limit.

3. In the event the number of complete nominations received exceeds the maximum number set by the Committee, a priority system was set up, but never actually applied as the number of nominations received for a cycle that were considered as complete never surpassed the limit imposed.
 - a) The following order of priorities is currently in force and would be used in case the ceiling of 45 complete nominations is surpassed, to select the nominations that can be transmitted to the Advisory Bodies for their evaluations:
 1. Nominations of properties submitted by States Parties with no properties inscribed on the List,
 2. Nominations of properties from any State Party that illustrate unrepresented or less represented categories of natural and cultural categories,
 3. Other nominations,
 4. When applying this priority system, date of receipt of full and complete nominations by the World Heritage Centre shall be used as secondary determining factor within the category where the number of nomination fixed by the Committee has been reached;
4. However, a series of theoretical tests were undertaken by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies in order to apply the priority system included in the Cairns Decision, as amended subsequently by the Cairns/Suzhou Decision. These tests revealed two major difficulties in the application of the priority system.
5. The first is an issue of calendar: the World Heritage Centre is asked to transmit to the Advisory Bodies the complete nominations received for a cycle in the month of March. If the number of complete nominations exceeds the overall limit, currently fixed at 45, it would be necessary to wait until the month of June/July for a Decision by the Committee applying the priority system. Therefore, the Advisory Bodies would lose 4 to 5 months time for their evaluation.
6. The second issue concerns the objective complexity to scientifically discern unrepresented or less represented categories of natural and cultural categories. For the latter reason, it would be highly recommended to review the current priority system in order to use more objective criteria to select the nominations considered as complete, in case the ceiling is surpassed.

C. Proposal for amendments to the order of priorities set up by the Cairns/Suzhou Decision.

7. Concerning the categories' break up of the 830 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, currently 644 are cultural, 162 natural and 24 mixed. The predominance of cultural properties that are safeguarded by the *Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* is still evident. Consequently, it is proposed to give priority to nominations of properties for natural and mixed heritage.
8. The *World Heritage Convention* was designed as an instrument to encourage the joint and common responsibility for the conservation of the World's Heritage through the means of the international cooperation. While, there is no better evidence of this joint responsibility than in transboundary/transnational nominations, at now, there are only 19 properties (2%) of this kind inscribed on the List. Consequently, it is proposed to give priority to nominations of transboundary/transnational properties.

9. For 22 years, from 1978 to 2000, States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention* could submit nominations without any limit. For the past seven years, following the Cairns Decision, in 2000, the limits applied have been more penalizing for those States Parties that have ratified the *World Heritage Convention* in the last decade. A revision of the priority system should take into account this discrepancy. Consequently, it is proposed to give priority to nominations of properties submitted by States Parties that ratified the World Heritage Convention over the last 10 years prior to their submission.
10. Other than in terms of time, the States Parties that have been more penalized by the restrictions imposed since 2000 can also be identified by the small number of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. At present, 63% of the States Parties to the *Convention*, 115 out of 183, have equal or less than 3 properties inscribed on the List. Consequently, it is proposed to give priority to nominations of properties submitted by States Parties with equal or less than 3 properties inscribed on the List.

D. Statistics on nominations received over the period 2003-2007.

11. Table 2 and 3 here below summarize the data of the five tables shown in the Annex 1 of this document and present it in form of percentage in order to better highlight the general trends.

From the figures presented in Table 2 it can be deduced that the application of the limits **has no an impact on the issue of the regional representativity of the List**.

Table 2 : Summary table of the nominations received by UNESCO's Regions

	Africa	Arab States	Asia / Pacific	Europe / North America	Latin America / Caribbean
Received 2003	9,8 %	5,6 %	24,0 %	52,1 %	8,5 %
Received 2004	16,4 %	8,2 %	24,6 %	39,3 %	11,5 %
Received 2005	9,8 %	3,9 %	25,5 %	49,0 %	11,7 %
Received 2006	13,9 %	3,0 %	32,3 %	43,1 %	7,7 %
Received 2007	3,7 %	5,6 %	29,6 %	44,4 %	16,7 %

On the contrary, the figures presented in Table 3, here below, show that the application of the limits **has a major impact on increasing submissions of nominations for natural properties**. However, it should be noticed that the number of mixed properties submitted has lowered subsequently.

Table 3. Summary table of the nominations received by category of property.

	NATURAL	CULTURAL	MIXED	NOT SPECIFIED
Received 2003	19,8 %	64,7 %	8,5 %	7,0 %
Received 2004	19,6 %	59,0 %	16,4 %	5,0 %
Received 2005	23,5 %	64,7 %	9,8 %	1,9 %
Received 2006	29,2 %	66,2 %	4,6 %	0,0 %
Received 2007	31,5 %	66,5 %	1,5 %	0,0 %

12. As specifically requested by the Committee at point 18b of Decision **28 COM 13.1**, Table 4 presents the situation relative to the properties presented at the 30th session of the Committee and table 5 the situation of those inscribed at that same session, held in Vilnius, July 2006.

Table 4

Submitted for 2006	Africa	Arab States	Asia / Pacific	Europe / North America	Latin America / Caribbean	Total	%
Natural	--	1	2	5	1	9	23 %
Cultural	6	2	4	13	3	28	72 %
Mixed	2	--	--	--	--	2	5 %
Total	8	3	6	18	4	39	
%	20,5 %	7,7 %	15,4 %	46,1 %	10,3 %		

Table 5

Inscribed 2006	Africa	Arab States	Asia / Pacific	Europe / North America	Latin America / Caribbean	Total	%
Natural	--	--	1	--	1	2	11%
Cultural	5	2	2	5	2	16	89%
Mixed	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Total	5	2	3	5	3	18	
%	27,8%	11%	16,7%	27,8%	16,7%		

However, it is difficult to deduce a trend from the data corresponding to a single cycle.

II. Draft Decision

Draft Decision 31 COM 10

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-07/31.COM/10,
2. Recalling Decision **28 COM 13.1** adopted at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004),
3. Adopts the following order of priorities for the examination of nominations to apply in case the overall annual limit of 45 nominations is exceeded:
 - a) nominations of properties submitted by States Parties with no properties inscribed on the List,
 - b) nominations of properties for natural heritage,
 - c) nominations of properties for mixed heritage,
 - d) nominations of transboundary/transnational properties,
 - e) nominations of properties submitted by States Parties that ratified the World Heritage Convention over the last 10 years prior to their submission,
 - f) nominations of properties submitted by States Parties with equal or less than 3 properties inscribed on the List,
 - g) when applying this priority system, date of receipt of full and complete nominations by the World Heritage Centre shall be used as secondary factor to determine the priority between those nominations that would not be designated by the previous points;
4. Also decides to amend paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines accordingly.

ANNEX 1

The following tables detail the situation concerning the nominations submitted for the last five cycles. Each table presents the figures of all the nomination files officially submitted by States Parties between 2 February and 1 February of the following year (i.e. "received 2003" includes all nomination files officially submitted by States Parties between 2 February 2002 and 1 February 2003 for examination by the Committee in 2004; "received 2004" includes all nomination files officially submitted by States Parties between 2 February 2003 and 1 February 2004 for examination by the Committee in 2005, etc.)

Received 2003	Africa	Arab States	Asia / Pacific	Europe / North America	Latin America / Caribbean	Total	Transmitted to Advisory Bodies
Natural	2	1	2	6	3	14	10
Cultural	2	3	12	27	2	46	37
Mixed	3	--	--	2	1	6	6
Not specified	--	--	3	2	--	5	--
Total	7	4	17	37	6	71	53¹

Received 2004	Africa	Arab States	Asia / Pacific	Europe / North America	Latin America / Caribbean	Total	Transmitted to Advisory Bodies
Natural	2	2	3	3	2	12	10
Cultural	4	3	7	18	4	36	32
Mixed	3		3	3	1	10	6
Not specified	1		2			3	--
Total	10	5	15	24	7	61	48¹

Received 2005	Africa	Arab States	Asia / Pacific	Europe / North America	Latin America / Caribbean	Total	Transmitted to Advisory Bodies
Natural	1	--	3	6	2	12	9
Cultural	4	2	8	16	4	34	23
Mixed	--	--	2	2	--	4	2
Not specified	--	--	--	1	--	1	--
Total	5	2	13	25	6	51	34

Received 2006	Africa	Arab States	Asia / Pacific	Europe / North America	Latin America / Caribbean	Total	Transmitted to Advisory Bodies
Natural	2	1	7	8	1	19	11
Cultural	5	1	14	19	4	43	32
Mixed	2	--	--	1	--	3	1
Not specified	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	9	2	21	28	5	65	44

Received 2007	Africa	Arab States	Asia / Pacific	Europe / North America	Latin America / Caribbean	Total	Transmitted to Advisory Bodies
Natural	--	2	4	8	3	17	13
Cultural	2	1	11	16	6	36	28
Mixed	--	--	1	--	--	1	--
Not specified	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	2	3	16	24	9	54	41

¹ This number exceeds the overall limit because it includes referred and deferred nominations and extensions of properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List. All these categories of nominations were exempted from the overall limit before the 28th session of the Committee (Suzhou, July 2004).