

Distribution limited

SC-91/CONF.002/4
17 October 1991
Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

World Heritage Committee
Fifteenth Session

Carthage, Tunisia
9-13 December 1991

**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: Monitoring of the State of
Conservation of Natural World Heritage Properties and Related
Technical Problems**

1. At its fifteenth session held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, from 17-21 June 1991, the Bureau received reports from representatives of IUCN and the Secretariat on the state of conservation of the following World Heritage properties: Kakadu National Park and the Wet Tropics of Queensland (Australia), Iguazu National Park (Argentina) and Iguacu National Park (Brazil), Pirin National Park (Bulgaria), Dinosaur Provincial Park and the Wood Buffalo National Park (Canada), Manovo-Gounda St. Floris National Park (Central African Republic), Talamanca Range-La Amistad Reserve (Costa Rica), La Amistad (Panama), Comoë National Park and Tai National Park (Cote d'Ivoire), Simien National Park (Ethiopia), Mont Saint Michel and its Bay (France), Mt. Nimba Strict Nature Reserve (Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire), Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras), Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India), Djoudj National Park and Niokolo Koba National Park (Senegal), Selous Game Reserve (Tanzania), Durmitor National Park and Plitvice Lakes National Park (Yugoslavia), and Garamba National Park and Kahuzi-Biega National Park (Zaire). The Bureau also discussed the application of the World Heritage Convention to Antarctica.

2. The observations and recommendations made by the Bureau with respect to each property whose state of conservation was reviewed were subsequently transmitted by the Secretariat to

the authorities of the States Parties concerned. Progress reports for some of the properties for which States Parties have provided information and clarification with respect to the points raised by the Bureau are given below:

3. Kakadu National Park (Australia): The Bureau was pleased to note that the Australian Commonwealth Government had decided not to allow mining at the Coronation Hill, located in an area that was to be nominated as part of the proposed Stage III of the extension of this World Heritage Site. Since Stage III of the proposed extension of the Kakadu National Park was estimated to be very much higher than 10% of the original extent of this property, the Bureau recommended that the proposed extension be considered as a new nomination. Accordingly, the Australian authorities have nominated the entire Kakadu National Park, including the re-nomination of Stages I and II which were already included on the World Heritage List, and a nomination of Stage III of the extension of this site. The nomination has already been transmitted to IUCN and ICOMOS for evaluation during 1992.

4. Wet Tropics of Queensland (Australia): The Bureau noted that although an agency had been set up for the management of this site, the Director and staff had only recently been appointed. The management planning process had also been delayed and no additional funds for field management activities had been provided. The Bureau was also concerned about the pace of tourism development in the site and a proposal for a hydropower development project which could impact the site. Therefore, the Bureau requested the Australian authorities to provide further elaboration on these problems so as to enable IUCN to report to the Committee at its forthcoming session. As requested by the Bureau, the Australian authorities have provided clarifications on all the points raised by the Bureau in their letter of 3 October 1991. This information has been transmitted to IUCN in order to enable IUCN to report during the session of the Committee.

5. Pirin National Park (Bulgaria): The Bureau was pleased to note that a major expansion of this site was under consideration by the Bulgarian authorities. The Bureau also noted the comment of the IUCN representative to the effect that there was great potential for establishing a transborder site with Greece by including areas adjacent to Pirin in Greece. The Bureau's recommendations were transmitted to the Bulgarian as well as the Greek Delegations to UNESCO. The Greek Delegation to UNESCO has contacted the Secretariat to obtain information on examples of transborder sites which are already inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Bulgarian Delegation has indicated their interest in consulting with IUCN in order to fully study the implications of establishing such a transborder site.

6. Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve (Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire): The Bureau noted the IUCN report on the plan to exploit an iron-ore deposit which, though situated outside the

Nature Reserve proper, nevertheless lay within the site inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981. The Bureau also noted the remark of a Guinean observer who recalled the commitments contained in the new management plan of the Mount Nimba Biosphere Reserve which the Guinean authorities had recently sent to the Secretariat, and the efforts made by those authorities to reconcile development with conservation requirements of the area. The Bureau recalled that it had been consulted in writing by the Secretariat regarding the timeliness of redefining the boundaries of the site inscribed on the World Heritage List; to this end, the Bureau confirmed that the Guinean authorities should submit an official request to the Secretariat accompanied by a map clearly showing the confines of the Strict Nature Reserve and requesting the revision of the boundaries of the site inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Bureau requested that this request be submitted to IUCN, which should examine the question of whether it was a simple modification of boundaries or whether a new evaluation of the property should be made in order to justify its retention - or not, as the case may be - on the World Heritage List. As requested by the Bureau, the Guinean authorities have submitted a renomination of the site clearly indicating its new boundaries. The nomination has been transmitted to IUCN for examination and reporting to the Committee.

7. Selous Game Reserve (Tanzania): The Bureau was concerned about a proposed plan of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development to open a route through this Reserve to drive cattle from the north to the south of Tanzania. Since the proposed launching of this plan was not based on a proper environmental impact study, and because the wildlife in the Reserve would be threatened by bacterial and viral infections from the cattle, the Bureau recommended that the Chairperson write to the Tanzanian authorities to seek clarifications on the proposed plan. However, in early July IUCN transmitted to the Secretariat information confirming that the plan had been abandoned.

8. Durmitor National Park (Yugoslavia): The Bureau was concerned that this Park, situated in Montenegro, was threatened by a proposed hydropower project which would affect water quality in the Tara River and flood portions of the Tara Canyon, which is one of the site's World Heritage values. The Bureau was also concerned that the Government of Montenegro, which has authority over the Park, is constructing a large asphalt plant upstream beside the Tara River which is already causing some water pollution. The Bureau requested the Yugoslav authorities to clarify the current status of plans for the development of the hydropower project and the asphalt plant. The recommendations of the Bureau were transmitted to the Permanent Delegation of Yugoslavia by letter of 13 August 1991. Subsequently, the Secretariat had a meeting with the Yugoslav Delegation attending UNESCO's 26th General Conference, and was informed that a report on Durmitor had

already been sent to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will report orally on its contents during the Committee meeting.

9. Plitvice Lake National Park (Yugoslavia): The Bureau was concerned that the Park has been abandoned by its staff due to civil unrest in the region and that destruction of forests and park facilities, hunting of bears and dynamite fishing were occurring due to lack of supervision of the Park. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to convey its concern to the Yugoslav authorities and urge them to seek a speedy solution to the problem. The Bureau also suggested that if the situation in the region improved in the immediate future, then the Yugoslav authorities be requested to invite a joint IUCN/UNESCO mission to assess the state of conservation of this Park. These recommendations of the Bureau were transmitted to the Permanent Delegate of Yugoslavia by letter of 13 August 1991. The Yugoslav Delegation, which is attending UNESCO's 26th General Conference, informed the Secretariat that the situation of the conflict in the region did not permit them to obtain any reliable information on the state of conservation of this site. The Permanent Delegate of Yugoslavia informed the Assistant Director-General for Culture that the Vice-President of Yugoslavia had announced in the Yugoslav Parliament that a mission from UNESCO would be welcome in his country. The Director-General has sent his personal representative to Yugoslavia and a mission will be arranged as soon as possible.

10. Hierapolis-Pamukkale (Turkey): This mixed site was inscribed on the World Heritage List by the Committee in 1988. IUCN had drawn the attention of the Bureau, at its fourteenth session, to the problem of over-use of this site by tourists. Subsequently, the Ministry of Culture of Turkey organized an international workshop from 1-3 July 1991, to discuss a draft "Preservation and Management Plan" for the site. The organization of this workshop was supported by a financial contribution of US\$20,000 from the World Heritage Fund. The "Preservation and Management Plan" for this World Heritage site contains several proposals, such as (a) the removal of all tourist facilities to locations outside of the World Heritage site; (b) the closure of a road crossing the World Heritage site; (c) restriction on visitor-use of the travertine pools to a small area near the northern entrance to the site, and (d) the development of some tourist facilities, such as car parks outside the northern entrance to the site which, if implemented, could improve the state of conservation of this site. However, there is substantial resistance from interest groups linked to the tourist industry against the implementation of these management strategies. The Secretariat is in contact with the Permanent Delegation of Turkey to UNESCO regarding the implementation of the Plan, and will provide an update on the subject at the time of the meeting of the Committee.

11. Kahuzi-Biega National Park (Zaire): The Bureau noted that IUCN had conducted an impact study and recommended that the proposed new road should not go through the Park but be re-routed around the northern boundaries of the Park. The Bureau was also informed of the fact that the study was being reviewed by the donor financing the road construction project (German bilateral aid agency) and the project also had implications for the ecology of the region. In a press release dated 30 September, the German Federal Minister for Economic Co-operation announced his decision against German participation in the construction of the last part of the Kisangani-Bukani Road if increased traffic will endanger species within the Kahuzi-Biega National Park. The Minister recognized the fact that the Kahuzi-Biega National Park had been given World Heritage Status by UNESCO and reiterated the need to find a solution whereby the road would not go through the Park but could be deviated around the Park. The German Parliament confirmed this decision by letter of 16 October to the Secretariat. The Minister's decision was influenced by the evaluation made by IUCN and the Minister also mentioned that German aid had already been provided for the conservation of Kahuzi-Biega National Park and the improvement of living conditions of people in surrounding areas, combining development and environmental protection interests.

12. Antarctica: The Bureau noted that the question of the application of the World Heritage Convention to all or part of this continent had been raised on several occasions, and that IUCN had published a strategy for the conservation of Antarctica which made explicit reference to the value of certain Antarctic sites as part of the World Heritage. While recognizing that the World Heritage Convention was not applicable as it stood to a continent outside national sovereignty, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to inform the consultative parties to the Treaty of Antarctica of the World Heritage concept within the context of their deliberations on the protection of the environment of that continent. This recommendation of the Bureau has been transmitted to the meeting of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty which began in Germany on the 7 October, through the Director-General of IUCN, who was participating in that meeting. In addition, the Bureau also requested that the question of the application of the Convention to Antarctica, and the amendments which this would require to be made to the Convention, be examined in the context of the evaluation of the Convention scheduled for 1992.

13. Representatives of IUCN will report on the state of conservation of the sites described above, as well as of other natural or mixed sites, during the meeting of the Committee.