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REPORT OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE ON ITS ACTIVITIES (2006-2007)

OUTLINE

Source: Article 29.3 of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage stipulates that “the Committee shall submit a report on its activities at each of the ordinary sessions of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization”.

Background: The Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the World Heritage Committee, was established by the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference at its 17th session on 16 November 1972.

Purpose: This document presents the report concerning the main activities and decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee since the 15th session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention held on 10-11 October 2005. Information relating to the 31st session of the World Heritage Committee, which took place from 23 June to 2 July 2007 in Christchurch, New Zealand, is included.

I. Overview and structure of this document

1. This document is intended to provide the General Conference with information regarding the main activities and decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee since the 15th General Assembly of States Parties (10-11 October 2005) in the implementation of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (hereinafter referred to as the World Heritage Convention).

2. In order to better present the large spectrum of information contained in this document, the main activities and decisions of the Committee have been grouped according to the strategic objectives of the World Heritage Committee. The Strategic Objectives, adopted by the Committee at its 26th session (Budapest, 2002), are the following:

- (a) strengthen the **credibility** of the World Heritage List;
- (b) ensure the effective **conservation** of the World Heritage properties;
- (c) promote the development of effective **capacity-building** in States Parties;
- (d) increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through **communication**.¹

3. To the above-mentioned four Strategic Objectives (also called “4 Cs”), the Committee, at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007), decided to add a “Fifth C” for “communities”, which reads as follows: “To enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention” (Decision 31 COM 13B).

II. Background information

A. Number of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention

4. As of May 2007, there are 184 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention.² Since the 15th General Assembly (10-11 October 2005), Guinea-Bissau, Montenegro, Sao Tome and Principe and Swaziland have joined the Convention.

B. Current Members of the World Heritage Committee and Bureau

5. Twenty-one members: Benin, Canada, Chile, Cuba, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Spain, Republic of Korea, Tunisia and United States of America. Their terms of office are:

- until the **end of the 34th session of the General Conference** (2007): Benin, Chile, India, Japan, Kuwait, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway;
- until the **end of the 35th session of the General Conference** (2009): Canada, Cuba, Israel, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Peru, Republic of Korea, Spain, Tunisia, United States of America.

¹ See Decision 26 COM 17.1 (Budapest, 2002).

² The list of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention is available at the following web address: <http://whc.unesco.org>.

Membership of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee since July 2005:

July 2005 – July 2006	July 2006 – July 2007	July 2007 – July 2008
Lithuania (Chairperson: H.E. Ms Ina Marčiulionytė)	New Zealand (Chairperson: Mr Tumu te Heuheu)	Canada (Chairperson: Dr Christina Cameron)
New Zealand (Rapporteur: Prof. Alexander Gillespie)	Canada (Rapporteur: Mr John Pinkerton)	<i>The Committee decided to elect the Rapporteur once new members of the Committee had been elected by the General Assembly of States Parties at its 16th session (Decision 31 COM 22.4)</i>
Benin	Benin	Israel
Chile	Cuba	Kenya
India	Japan	Peru
Kuwait	Morocco	Tunisia
Netherlands	Norway	Republic of Korea

C. Number of seats in the World Heritage Committee reserved for States Parties with no property on the World Heritage List

6. Following Rule 14.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, the World Heritage Committee decided to reserve **one** seat on the Committee to be elected by the General Assembly at its 16th session (UNESCO, 24-25 October 2007) for a State Party with no property on the World Heritage List (Decision 31 COM 6.6)

D. World Heritage statutory meetings since the 15th General Assembly (10-11 October 2005)

Meeting session	Venue	Dates	Documents prepared
30th session of the World Heritage Committee (30 COM)	Vilnius, Lithuania	8-16 July 2006	38 working/14 information documents (WHC-06/30.COM/)
31st session of the World Heritage Committee (31 COM)	Christchurch, New Zealand	23 June-2 July 2007	46 working documents/18 information documents (WHC-07/31.COM/)
Total	84 working/32 information documents (116 documents in total)		

E. Strengthening the credibility of the World Heritage List**Nominations to the World Heritage List:**

7. The World Heritage Committee revised the mechanism to set an annual limit on the number of nominations to be examined each year by the Committee ("Cairns-Suzhou" Decision). While maintaining the current practice of examining up to two complete nominations per State Party per year (provided that at least one of such nominations concerns a natural property), the Committee decided, on an experimental basis for a period of four years, that a State Party should be permitted to decide on the nature of the nomination, whether natural or cultural, as per its national priorities, its history and geography. The Committee also decided on an order of priorities for the examination of nominations to apply in case the overall annual limit of 45 nominations is exceeded (Decision 31 COM 10).

Inscription of properties on the World Heritage List since the 15th General Assembly (10-15 October 2005)

Region	New cultural properties	New natural properties	New mixed properties	Total
Africa	7	1	1	9
Arab States	3			3
Asia/Pacific	7	3		10
Europe/North America	12	2		14
Latin America/Caribbean	3	1		4
TOTAL	32	7	1	40

8. The total number of properties on the World Heritage List as of July 2007 is 851 (660 cultural, 166 natural and 25 mixed).³ These properties are located in 141 States Parties (i.e. 43 States Parties have no property inscribed on the World Heritage List). One hundred and fifty-seven States Parties have submitted Tentative Lists of properties they may decide to nominate in future years.

Inscription of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger since the 15th General Assembly (10-11 October 2005)

Committee session	Number of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger	Number of properties removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger
30 COM (Vilnius, 2006)	2 - Dresden Elbe Valley, Germany; - Medieval Monuments in Kosovo, Serbia	5 - Tipasa, Algeria; - Cologne Cathedral, Germany; - Groups of monuments at Hampi, India; - Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary, Senegal; - Ichkeul National Park, Tunisia
31 COM (Christchurch, 2007)	3 - Galapagos, Ecuador; - Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal; - Samarra, Iraq	4 - Everglades National Park, USA; - Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, Honduras; - Royal Palaces of Abomey, Benin; - Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.

9. The total number of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger as of 2 July 2007 is 30 (17 cultural and 13 natural).⁴ These properties are located in 24 States Parties.

Deletion of properties from the World Heritage List

10. For the first time in the history of UNESCO's Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the World Heritage Committee decided the deletion of a property, the **Arabian Oryx Sanctuary (Oman)**, from the World Heritage List because the State Party failed to fulfil its obligations defined in the Convention, in particular the obligation to protect and conserve the World Heritage property of the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary and therefore the property has deteriorated to the extent that it has lost its outstanding universal value (Decision 31 COM 7.B.11).

³

The World Heritage List is available at the following web address: <http://whc.unesco.org>.

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The List of World Heritage in Danger is available at the following web address: <http://whc.unesco.org>.

Global Strategy for a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage List

11. International, interregional and regional meetings and workshops have been organized for the implementation of the Global Strategy such as:

- a meeting on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge project, held at the invitation of the Government of Iceland (January 2007);
- a Stakeholders Consultation Workshop on the Silk Roads World Heritage Nomination in Turpan, Xinjiang, China (1-8 August 2006) and Subregional Workshops on the Serial World Heritage Nomination for Central Asian Silk Roads in Samarkand, Uzbekistan (25-31 October 2006) and Dushanbe, Tajikistan (15-21 April 2007);
- a Pacific Regional Meeting, as part of the Pacific 2009 Action Plan, in the Tongariro National Park, New Zealand (18-23 February 2007).

12. Details of all these activities are included in documents WHC-06/30.COM/6 and WHC-07/31.COM/5.

F. Ensuring the effective conservation of World Heritage properties**State of Conservation reports of World Heritage properties examined by the Committee since the 15th General Assembly (10-11 October 2005)**

30 COM	List of World Heritage in danger	World Heritage List
Africa	13	17
Arab States	6	14
Asia/Pacific	8	23
Europe/North America	3	35
Latin America/Caribbean	4	10
TOTAL	34	99
31 COM	List of World Heritage in Danger	World Heritage List
Africa	12	18
Arab States	4	18
Asia/Pacific	7	30
Europe/North America	4	46
Latin America/Caribbean	4	18
TOTAL	31	130

Approved International Assistance (IA) from the World Heritage Fund since the 15th General Assembly (10-11 October 2005)⁵

Regions	Number of States Parties to request IA	Number of requests	Total Amount Approved (in US \$)
Africa	10	11	316,934
Arab States	3	3	75,833
Asia and the Pacific	12	16	525,325
Europe and North America	1	1	27,100
Central and Eastern Europe	1	1	17,620
Latin America and the Caribbean	9	13	296,258
TOTAL	36	45	1,259,070

⁵

As of 20 July 2007.

Periodic reporting

13. In the context of the Periodic Reporting Reflection Year (Decision 7 EXT.COM 5), and following the World Heritage Committee's decision to suspend for two years the commencement of the next cycle of Periodic Reporting in order to study and reflect on the first cycle (Decision 30 COM 11.G, para. 5), the World Heritage Centre organized two meetings at UNESCO Headquarters on the Periodic Reporting Reflection Year (9-10 November 2006 and 24 January 2007), and two workshops on the simplification of the questionnaire and the establishment of indicators (6-7 November 2006 and 22-23 January 2007). A full report of the outcomes of such meetings is included in document WHC-07/31.COM/11D.1).

Reinforced monitoring mechanism

14. The Committee, at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007) adopted with immediate effect the reinforced monitoring mechanism proposed by the Director-General to ensure the proper implementation of the World Heritage Committee's decisions concerning the state of conservation of properties. The Committee underlined that reinforced monitoring is a constant cooperative process with the State Party concerned (Decision 31 COM 5.2).

15. The Committee also decided to apply this reinforced monitoring mechanism to the following World Heritage properties:

- Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Kahuzi-Biega National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Salonga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Okapi Wildlife Reserve (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan)
- Dresden Elbe Valley (Germany)

International conferences and symposia

16. A number of international conferences and symposiums focused on various World Heritage issues were organized by the World Heritage Centre or with the Centre's assistance. A full inventory of these activities is included in documents WHC-06/30.COM/6 and WHC-05/29.COM/5.

G. Promoting the development of effective capacity-building in States Parties

Global training strategy

17. The World Heritage Centre continued to promote the development of effective **capacity-building** measures with training courses, seminars and other technical cooperation activities and on-site conservation workshops (a full inventory of these training and other activities is included in documents WHC-06/30.COM/6 and WHC-07/31.COM/5).

Education activities

18. A number of international and regional workshops and training courses were organized by the World Heritage Centre or with the Centre's assistance to develop educational activities related to World Heritage (a full inventory of these training and other activities is included in documents WHC-06/30.COM/6 and WHC-07/31.COM/5).

19. The World Heritage in Young Hands Educational Resource Kit for Teachers was produced in Hungarian, Lithuanian and Spanish (second edition) bringing the number of language versions to 29. Translations have also been made into Portuguese, Latvian and Amharic.

H. Increasing public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication

Awareness-raising

20. In 2006, the World Heritage Website <http://whc.unesco.org> received an average of 16,295 visitors per day. Traffic to the World Heritage website increased by 5.2% per month, from 480,940 visits in April 2006 to 506,069 visits in April 2007.

21. Articles and interviews on World Heritage have been published through work with numerous international and national well-known media.

Publications

22. Following Decision 26 COM 8.3 (Budapest, 2002) and thanks to the support of the Italian Funds-in-Trust, a new publication, *World Heritage: Challenges for the Millennium*, was published in English and French. The book provides a comprehensive overview and analysis of more than three decades of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

23. A special publication on *Case Studies on Climate Change and World Heritage* had also been produced.

24. Four new publications (Nos. 19-22) were issued in the World Heritage Paper Series: *American Fortifications and the World Heritage Convention*; *Period Report and Action Plan, Europe 2005-2006*; *World Heritage Forests: Leveraging Conservation at the Landscape Level*; and *Predicting and Managing the Effects of Climate Change on World Heritage*.

25. One hundred thousand copies of the World Heritage Map were published in partnership with National Geographic and Hewlett Packard in English, French and Spanish. A further 120,000 copies were disseminated in the United States of America through the November/December 2006 edition of the *National Geographic Traveler* magazine, with the participation of the Mexican and Peruvian Tourist Boards.

Bilateral agreements with States Parties and partnerships

26. Bilateral agreements for the promotion of World Heritage have been signed with a number of national governments. An inventory of bilateral agreements with States Parties, together with a full report on the evaluation of the World Heritage Partnerships for Conservation Initiative (PACT) is included in document WHC-07/31.COM.15.