



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



The Protection of the
Underwater Cultural Heritage

6 STAB

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

CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

SIXTH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BODY

30 April 2015
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XIV (-1, Bonvin)
10 am – 6 pm

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda:

Operational Assistance to States Parties

The present document contains explanations and a draft decision concerning assistance missions of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB).

Action required: paragraph 6

1. In May 2014, the US American explorer Barry Clifford announced that he had discovered the remains of the *Santa Maria* off Cap Haitien, Haiti.
2. In June 2014, the Minister of Culture of Haiti by letter to the Chairperson of the Meeting of States Parties of the 2001 Convention requested that the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB) assist Haiti concerning the possible discovery of the wreck of the *Santa Maria*. The authorities requested:
 - a. an evaluation of the Investigation Project proposed by Barry Clifford;
 - b. a mission to Haiti to verify the identification of the site claimed to be the *Santa Maria*; and
 - c. assistance in the elaboration of a national plan and survey of underwater cultural heritage.
3. The Chairperson of the Meeting of States Parties convened a meeting of the Bureau in June 2014, which passed a Resolution requesting that the STAB assist Haiti.
4. The project proposed by Mr Barry Clifford and Prof Charles Beeker from Indiana University was evaluated negatively by the STAB, and the evaluation report was officially adopted and transmitted to the Haitian authorities (Minister of Culture). The STAB judged that the proposed team lacked in competence and the appropriate methodology for the project.
5. The Minister subsequently requested a STAB mission, which took place from 5 to 22 September 2014. The mission was led by the designated expert, Mr Xavier Nieto Prieto (Spain), in agreement with the Spanish government and funded by Haiti. The investigation report by Mr Nieto was submitted to the Chairperson of the STAB through the Secretariat. In close cooperation with the Chairperson, the Secretariat then consulted the STAB, as well as numerous experts. A draft Evaluation Report was submitted to the STAB, and commented on. The STAB then judged finally that the site concerned was not the *Santa Maria*. The STAB officially adopted its Evaluation Report on 3 October 2014, and the Secretariat was requested to submit it to the Haitian Ministry of Culture, which was done on 6 October 2014, after its translation into French. Following this submission, the report was then made public on the STAB website at www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/underwater-cultural-heritage/advisory-body/mission-to-haiti. Several hundreds of articles in the international press reflected the results of the evaluation of the site by the STAB, especially in the United States of America and in Europe.
6. The third issue for which the STAB has been contacted, i.e. the assistance in the elaboration of a national plan and survey and inventory of underwater cultural heritage, has not yet been addressed.
7. The Advisory Body may wish to adopt the following Resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 5 / STAB 6

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB) to the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage,

1. Having examined document UCH/15/5.MSP/7 and Resolution 7/5 MSP,
2. Decides to assist in implementing the recommendations contained in the STAB Evaluation Report of the Mission to Haiti subject to the availability of funds.