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WHC-03/27.COM/14  
Paris, 12 June 2003  
Original : English/French

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND  
CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD  
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-seventh session

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII  
30 June – 5 July 2003

**Item 14 of the Provisional Agenda: Nominations to be examined at the forthcoming sessions: B. Evaluation of the Cairns Decision**

**SUMMARY**

*Draft Decision:*

**27 COM 14** *The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Decides to retain the limit of one new and complete nomination per State Party with properties already on the World Heritage List, as the best means of managing the workload of the Committee, the Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre, and of improving the geographic distribution of properties on the World Heritage List; States Parties that have no properties inscribed on the World Heritage List will have the opportunity to nominate two or three properties;*
2. *Decides to continue to exempt from this limit transboundary and emergency nominations, changes to the boundaries of properties already inscribed, as well as those nominations which have been deferred and referred by previous sessions of the Committee;*
3. *Invites States Parties nominating properties to keep in mind the desirability of achieving a reasonable balance between the numbers of cultural heritage and natural heritage properties included in the World Heritage List (Paragraph 15 of the Operational Guidelines, July 2002);*
4. *Decides to eliminate the annual limit on the number of new nominations it will review; and*
5. *Decides to maintain the deadline for the receipt of complete nominations as 1 February and encourages States Parties to submit draft nominations by 30 September to ensure that nominations have the maximum opportunity of being complete on 1 February (Decision 6 EXT.COM 5.1 annex 3.9).*

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Committee at its 24th session (Cairns, 2000) established two separate limits on the number of nominations to be examined each year, for separate reasons.

- (i) A limit of one new nomination per State Party (with exceptions for States Parties without properties on the World Heritage List) was established in an attempt to improve the geographic distribution of new nominations.
- (ii) An annual limit on the number of new nominations it would review annually (provisionally set at 30 nominations per year) was established on an interim basis to manage the workload of the Committee, Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre.

2. These two limits make up the "Cairns Decision" (see Annex) that the Committee has asked to be reviewed at its 27th session. The Committee exempted nominations deferred or referred from previous meetings, changes to the boundaries of already inscribed properties, as well as, on an emergency basis, situations falling under paragraph 67 of the *Operational Guidelines* (July 2002). At its 25th session (Helsinki, 2001), the Committee also exempted transboundary nominations.

3. These two limits on the number of nominations to be examined each year are considered separately in the analysis which follows.

### **LIMIT OF ONE NEW NOMINATION PER STATE PARTY (WITH EXCEPTIONS FOR STATES PARTIES WITHOUT PROPERTIES ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST)**

4. The goal of this limit was to increase the geographic representation of properties on the World Heritage List.

5. The Committee's own decision to exempt transboundary nominations, as well as extensions and deferred and referred nominations, broadens the scope of the List while at the same time placing limits on the rate at which it may grow in length.

6. In addition, the use of transboundary nominations encourages one of the principal goals of the Convention, international collaboration in the protection of heritage. This is particularly true for potential multi-country serial nominations, such as the Alpine Arc, the Frontiers of the Roman Empire, the Central Pacific Islands and Atolls, the Inca Trail, the Great Rift Valley or the proposed 10-country Strouve Geodetic Arc (Norway-Republic of Moldova).

### **Forecasts**

7. The success of the limit of one nomination per State Party can be gauged by examining the recent history of nominations prior to the Cairns decision in 2000. This review shows that the number of nominations examined by the Committee would have been sharply reduced, had the rule of one nomination per State Party been in place prior to 2000.

New Nominations received between 2/7/97 and 1/7/98: 65

34 States Parties submitted new nominations, two of whom submitted for the first time  
13 States Parties with properties already on the List submitted more than one nomination (one Asian State Party submitted 9 nominations). Had the rule limiting these States to one new nomination per country been in force, 27 nominations would not have been receivable, leaving **38 new nominations**

New Nominations received between 2/7/98 and 1/7/99: 49

30 States Parties submitted new nominations  
11 States Parties with properties already on the List submitted more than one nomination. Had the rule limiting these States to one new nomination per country been in force, 19 nominations would not have been receivable, leaving **30 new nominations**

New Nominations received between 2/7/99 and 1/7/2000: 58

33 States Parties submitted new nominations, two of whom submitted for the first time (3 nominations from each).  
9 States Parties with properties already on the List submitted more than one nomination. Had the rule limiting these States to one new nomination per country been in force, 21 nominations would not have been receivable, leaving **27 new nominations**

## Capacity of the World Heritage Committee and the Advisory Bodies

### World Heritage Committee

#### Number of nominations examined by the World Heritage Committee 1997-2002

Committee session	Year	Total number of evaluations presented by the Advisory Bodies
21st session	1997	48
22nd session	1998	34
23rd session	1999	57
24th session	2000	71
25th session	2001	45
26th session	2002	14

8. The past practice of the Committee has shown that an average of 20 minutes is necessary for the evaluation of each nomination, including presentation by the Advisory Bod(ies) and discussion. The total number of presentations in the table above includes presentations of deferred and referred nominations and extensions.

9. In a typical six-day meeting of the World Heritage Committee, 4-1/2 days is usually devoted to the meeting agenda, with 1-1/2 days for report preparation and adoption. The Secretariat recommends that a maximum of 2 days (48 presentations) be set aside for examination of nominations.

## ICOMOS and IUCN

10. Both IUCN and ICOMOS were asked about their capacities to manage an increase in the number of nominations.

11. Based on recent practice, IUCN generally evaluates between 10 and 15 nominations per year (including deferred nominations and extensions). According to IUCN estimates, with existing staff, IUCN can evaluate 15-17 nominations per year, but not more than 20, without additional resources.

12. Based on recent practice, ICOMOS evaluates between 30 and 40 nominations per year (including deferred nominations and extensions). According to ICOMOS estimates, with existing staff, ICOMOS can evaluate 40 new nominations per year without additional resources.

## **ANNUAL LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF NEW NOMINATIONS TO BE EXAMINED BY THE COMMITTEE**

13. The annual limit was set at 30 on an interim basis by the Committee after consultation with the Advisory Bodies. The Committee considered that should more than 30 new and complete nominations be received, they could be selected based on "under-represented categories" of sites, based on a study to be provided by the Advisory Bodies.

### Under-represented categories

14. At its 24th session (Cairns, 2000), the Committee asked that ICOMOS and IUCN prepare an analysis of the World Heritage List and Tentative List on a regional, chronological, geographical and thematic basis. This analysis will be presented to the 28th session of the Committee.

15. However, there has been a growing recognition that such analyses could not be objectively used to "select" nominations in under-represented categories. The analyses will show some general gaps in themes and geographic regions, but they are unlikely to provide any conclusive analysis to allow the necessary objective selection of nominations that would be required by the Committee's decision in Cairns.

16. The positive results of the analyses will instead provide guidance to States Parties in encouraging the further development of Tentative Lists and ultimately in stimulating nominations from under-represented regions and themes.

### Date of receipt of full and complete nominations

17. At its 24th session, the Committee requested that the "date of receipt of full and complete nominations by the World Heritage Centre [should] be used as the secondary determining factor within the category where the number of nominations established by the Committee is reached."

18. The use of "date of receipt" as a determining factor would turn the registration process (and review of completeness) into a simple "first-come-first-served" contest, and give an advantage to States Parties with the financial resources to respond quickly. This means of selection is not therefore recommended.

19. The standard established by the Cairns decision of "full and complete" is nevertheless an important one for future management and effectiveness, ensuring that properties nominated have the proper legal and management safeguards, clear boundaries, etc. as required by the *Operational Guidelines*.

20. In the first two years of reviewing nominations for technical completeness (2002, 2003), between 26 and 30% of new nominations were found not to meet the conditions for nominations as established by the Committee in the *Operational Guidelines*.

21. However, the Committee's decision at its 6th extraordinary session to introduce a voluntary deadline for draft nominations (Decision **6 EXT.COM 5.1 annex 3.9**) will allow the Centre to become more proactive in assisting States Parties to submit complete nominations by 1 February.

### Conclusion

22. Considering that the objective of the annual limit was to manage the work load of the Committee, the Advisory Bodies and the Centre, the 27th session of the Committee may wish to decide that this objective will be achieved by limiting the number of nominations a State Party may propose each year, rather than by retaining an annual limit.

## Text of the Cairns decision, adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 24th session (2000)

In order to promote the effective management of the increasing size of the World Heritage List, the Committee at each ordinary session will set the maximum number of nominations to be considered. In the first instance and on an interim basis, it is proposed that at the twenty-seventh session of the Committee in 2003, the number of nominations examined by the Committee will be limited to a maximum of 30 new sites.

In order to determine which sites should be given priority for consideration, all nominations to be considered at the twenty-seventh session of the Committee must be received in full by the new due date of 1 February 2002 agreed by the Committee as part of the change of cycle of meetings. No State Parties should submit more than one nomination, except those States Parties that have no sites inscribed on the World Heritage List who will have the opportunity to propose two or three nominations.

In order to address the issue of representivity of the List the following criteria will be applied in order of priority<sup>1</sup>:

In the event that the number of nominations received exceeds the maximum number set by the Committee, the following priority system will be applied each year by the World Heritage Centre before nominations are transmitted to the advisory bodies for evaluation, in determining which sites should be taken forward for consideration:

1. Nominations of sites submitted by a State Party with no sites inscribed on the List;<sup>2</sup>

2. Nominations of sites from any State Party that illustrate un-represented or less represented categories of natural and cultural properties, as determined by analyses prepared by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies and reviewed and approved by the Committee;

3. Other nominations.

When applying this priority system, date of receipt of full and complete nominations by the World Heritage Centre shall be used as the secondary determining factor within the category where the number of nominations established by the Committee is reached.

In addition to the approved maximum number of sites, the Committee will also consider nominations deferred, or referred, from previous meetings and changes to the boundaries of already inscribed properties. The Committee may also decide to consider, on an emergency basis, situations falling under paragraph 67 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

### Review

The system described above is to be reviewed by the Committee after two full years of operation.

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<sup>1</sup> In nominating properties to the List, States Parties are invited to keep in mind the desirability of achieving a reasonable balance between the numbers of cultural heritage and natural heritage properties included in the World Heritage List (Paragraph 15 of the *Operational Guidelines*)

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<sup>2</sup> In evaluating these, and all other nominations, the Advisory Bodies should continue to apply a strict evaluation of criteria as set out in the *Operational Guidelines*.