



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



The Protection of the
Underwater Cultural Heritage

5 STAB

UCH/14/5.STAB/220/2 REV 2

22 May 2014

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

CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

FIFTH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY BODY

**11 June 2014, UNESCO Headquarters, Room VI
7, place de Fontenoy, Paris
10 am – 6 pm**

Item 2 of the Provisional Agenda:

Best Practices regarding Public Access to Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites

Action required : paragraph 7

1. Article 2.10 of the 2001 Convention provides that “Responsible non-intrusive access to observe or document *in situ* underwater cultural heritage shall be encouraged to create public awareness, appreciation, and protection of the heritage except where such access is incompatible with its protection and management.”
2. According to Article 1.b of its Statutes, the Advisory Body shall propose to the Meeting of States Parties standards of and means to promote best practice in underwater cultural heritage sites protection.
3. By Recommendation 2 / STAB 4 paragraph, adopted by the Advisory Body at its fourth meeting in 2013, the Advisory Body decided “to collect, until its next session, a Best Practice List of Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites regarding public access according to the following criteria:
 - a. the site falls under the definition of Article 1 of the 2001 Convention;
 - b. it is legally and practically appropriately protected;
 - c. responsible, non-intrusive access is respected;
 - d. the site has a framework to guarantee sustainable management;
 - e. a special and outstanding effort has been made to make the site accessible to the public.”
4. It also decided to further discuss this initiative at its fifth session and to recommend to the Meeting of States Parties to give visibility to such examples by according them a designation as well as to call on States Parties to propose sites to this Best Practice List.
5. The Secretariat informed States Parties by the letter of 6 March 2014 of this initiative. A copy of the letter is attached.
6. The Advisory Body may now wish to discuss the most effective ways to guide the States Parties in this exercise. It could provide indications on the basis of a review of concrete cases for discussion. The Advisory Body may also wish to discuss the possible implications of designating best practices. The following questions might serve as a starting point for discussions:

- a. Should best practices involve only access to *in situ* underwater cultural heritage or should they extend to virtual or museum access and other forms of access?
 - b. Should a best practice example be limited in time and should implementation be monitored?
 - c. What type of information should a State Party provide to serve as the basis for the evaluation of the best practice by the Advisory Body and the Meeting of States Parties? Would an on-site mission be required or could the decision be based on videos, images and reports?
 - d. What role would the following stakeholders play in the process: the National Commissions for UNESCO, local communities, the State authorities and the private sector?
 - e. How can best practices be most effectively disseminated and promoted?
7. The Advisory Body may wish to adopt the following recommendation:

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION 2/STAB 5

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

1. Having examined document UCH/14/5.STAB/220/2;
2. Recalling Article 2.10 of the Convention which provides that 'Responsible non-intrusive access to observe or document in-situ underwater cultural heritage shall be encouraged to create public awareness, appreciation, and protection of the heritage except where such access is incompatible with its protection and management;
3. Also recalling its duty, according to Article 1.b of its Statutes, to propose to the Meeting of States Parties standards of and means to promote best practice in underwater cultural heritage sites protection;
4. Further recalling Recommendation 2/STAB 4 adopted at its fourth session in 2013 by which it decided to collect examples of best practice regarding public access to underwater cultural heritage;

5. Recommends to the fifth session of the Meeting of States Parties in 2015 to invite States Parties to the Convention to provide examples demonstrating such best practices according to the following criteria:
 1. the site falls under the definition of Article 1 of the 2001 Convention;
 2. it is appropriately protected both legally and practically;
 3. responsible, non-intrusive access is respected;
 4. the site has a framework to guarantee sustainable management;
 5. a special and outstanding effort has been made to make the site accessible to the public.

6. Also recommends that the fifth session of the Meeting of States Parties request the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body to review the examples of best practices provided by the States Parties and to make recommendations in that regard to the sixth session of the Meeting of States Parties in 2017, with a view to fostering responsible public access to underwater cultural heritage worldwide.

Annex I: Letter from the UNESCO Secretariat to States Parties (6 March 2014)



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des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
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la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

The Assistant Director-General for Culture

To States Parties to the 2001
Convention

6 March 2014

Ref.: CLT/CEH/CHP/14/0665

Subject: **Best Practices regarding public access to Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites**

Sir/Madam,

I have the honour to consult your country concerning best access practices to submerged cultural heritage sites, in its capacity as State Party to the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

As you may know, in its fourth meeting, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body of the Convention recognized the issue of public access as one of the most important challenges facing underwater cultural heritage today. In this regard, the 2001 Convention affirms in its Article 2.10: "Responsible non-intrusive access to observe or document *in situ* underwater cultural heritage shall be encouraged to create public awareness, appreciation, and protection of the heritage, except where such access is incompatible with its protection and management."

In accordance with the Convention and its Statutes, the Advisory Body has endeavoured, by Recommendation 2 / STAB 4, to undertake the identification of Best Practices in the provision of access to underwater cultural heritage sites. The underlying objective is to foster and guide public access, while ensuring and increasing heritage preservation as effectively as possible.

The Advisory Body has proposed the following criteria be applied when determining best practice in public access to underwater cultural heritage:

- a. The site falls under the definition of Article 1 of the 2001 Convention;
- b. It is legally and appropriately protected;
- c. Responsible, non-intrusive access is respected;
- d. The site has a framework to guarantee sustainable management;
- e. A special and outstanding effort has been made to make the site accessible to the public.

.../.

The Advisory Body also considered recommending to the Meeting of States Parties designating best practices as regards public access to underwater cultural heritage sites.

In order to allow the Advisory Body to undertake further consideration of this issue at its fifth meeting on 11 June 2014, and to finalize its recommendations to the Meeting of States Parties, which will meet in 2015, we request that you kindly provide comments and suggestions on the above-mentioned criteria, the procedures to be applied, the role of the Meeting of States Parties and of the Advisory Body in this process as well as on the scope and nature of the information States should provide for any site to be considered.

Please send your contribution no later than **15 May 2014** to Ms Ulrike Guérin, Programme Specialist in charge of the 2001 Convention (tel.: + 33 1 45 68 44 06, fax: + 33 1 45 68 55 96, email: u.guerin@unesco.org). Ms Guérin will also be pleased to provide you with additional information should you wish so.

Thank you in advance for your interest in safeguarding the underwater cultural heritage.

Yours sincerely,



Francesco Bandarin

cc: National Commissions of States Parties