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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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World Heritage

21 GA

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters
14-15 November 2017

SUMMARY RECORDS

RESUME DES TRAVAUX

FIRST DAY – Tuesday, 14 November 2017
FIRST MEETING
10 am – 1 pm
Chairperson: H.E. Mr. ADRIAN CIOROIANU (Romania)

ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE SESSION

1A. Opening of the General Assembly by the Director-General

No document
No Draft Resolution

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** welcomed the participants to the meeting and invited the **Director-General of UNESCO**, Mrs Irina Bokova, to address the General Assembly.

The Director-General indicated that it was with a deep emotion she was addressing the General Assembly for the last time as Director-General of UNESCO, and expressed her gratitude to all States Parties for the long way travelled together towards the protection and preservation of a shared heritage.

She indicated that, as a result, the protection of heritage is today fully recognized as a key security issue as expressed in two recent and historical decisions of the United Nations Security Council – resolution 2199 adopted in February 2015 and resolution 2347 in March. She also underlined that another major political achievement today, is the full recognition of the promotion of heritage and cultural diversity as an enabler of sustainable development, a driver for stronger economies and societies.

However, the Director-General also indicated that World Heritage is not just a list of marvelous sites; neither a beauty contest, nor a political arena and that it should be considered as a vision for peace with the power to change the minds of women and men. She also insisted on the fact that World Heritage is not about division, but about building common ground a place for dialogue and mutual understanding.

The Director-General recalled actions taken since 2009 to overcome the challenges facing the Convention and notably the work undertaken to facilitate dialogue, communication, transparency and accountability notably throughout the nomination processes.

La Directrice générale rappelle les enjeux auxquels il faut faire face: enjeux humanitaires et de protection d'urgence du patrimoine menacé, notamment par les actes de destruction délibérée. Elle rappelle également la responsabilité de l'UNESCO qui ne peut être mise en œuvre qu'avec le soutien politique et financier des Etats parties. Dans ce cadre, elle souligne l'importance de la prise de décision dans le respect des règles et des textes de la Convention.

[The speech of the Director-General can be found in its entirety in Annex I]

1B. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur of the General Assembly

Document: WHC/17/21.GA/INF.1B
No Draft Resolution

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** indicated that, as per Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure, the General Assembly has to elect a Chairperson, one or more Vice-chairpersons and a Rapporteur. She indicated that the list of Chairpersons, Vice-chairpersons and Rapporteurs of the General Assembly since 1991, included in Document INF.1B, was at the disposal of the General Assembly.

The Delegation of **Poland** supported by the Delegation of **Serbia**, proposed **H.E. Mr. ADRIAN CIOROIANU (Romania)**, as Chairperson of the 21st session of the General Assembly.

This proposal was approved by acclamation.

On proposals made by the Delegations of **Portugal** and **Honduras**, the representatives of **Cyprus** and **Chile** were designated Vice-chairpersons by acclamation.

The Delegation of **Hungary** presented the candidature of **H.E. Ms. FEVEN TEWOLDE (Ethiopia)** as Rapporteur of the 21th General Assembly. This proposal was approved by acclamation.

Item 1 of the Agenda was closed.

ITEM 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OF THE TIMETABLE OF THE 21ST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2A. Adoption of the Agenda of the 21st session of the General Assembly

2B. Adoption of the Timetable of the 21st session of the General Assembly

Documents: WHC/17/21.GA/2A
WHC/17/21.GA /INF.2A.Rev
WHC/17/21.GA/2B

Draft Resolution: **21 GA 2A**
Draft Resolution: **21 GA 2B**

Le **Président** remercie la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO pour son soutien à la *Convention* et donne la parole à la **Directrice du centre du patrimoine mondial**, qui présente brièvement les documents 2A et 2B.

A cet égard, le **Secrétariat** confirme que les élections pour le Comité du patrimoine mondial commenceront avant le déjeuner.

En ce qui concerne le **point 2B**, le **Président** informe l'Assemblée générale que, si les travaux avancent rapidement, des ajustements seront effectués au calendrier de la session et demande aux Etats parties d'être attentifs au déroulement des travaux afin de ne pas être surpris par d'éventuels avancements d'examen des points.

The **Secretariat** further informed that an extraordinary session of the Committee would take place the next day, 15th of November, to elect the Bureau of the 42nd session of the Committee, and that an induction session for new Committee Members would be organized immediately after this meeting.

Draft Resolutions **21 GA 2A** and **21 GA 2B** were adopted.

Item 2 of the Agenda was closed.

ITEM 3 REPORT OF THE RAPPOREUR OF THE 20TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNESCO, 2015)

*No Document
No Draft Resolution*

Le Président informe l'Assemblée générale que, **M. Marcelo Dantas da Costa** (Brésil), Rapporteur de la 20^e session de l'Assemblée générale, n'a pas malheureusement pu être présent et qu'il a souhaité que la Délégation du Brésil donne lecture de son Rapport.

The Delegation of **Brazil** presented the Report of the Rapporteur of the 20th session of the General Assembly of States Parties.

The Report recalled that the 20th session of the General Assembly was held from 18-20 November 2015 at UNESCO Headquarters and that it adopted a total of 15 Resolutions pertaining to the conceptual, financial and administrative aspects of the Convention, among which was the election of new members to the World Heritage Committee for a four-year mandate (Angola, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Indonesia, Kuwait, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe). The main issues of the session focused on the situation of the World Heritage Fund and its sustainability and the reflections of the ad hoc working group of the World Heritage Committee. The report also underlined that Member States presented their views on the follow-up to the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List as well as on the need to integrate a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention. The report also referred to the discussion by the Committee on Governance in the framework of enhancement of the credibility of the Convention.

Furthermore it noted that efforts should concentrate in areas of training and further education; greater commitment to young people; improve public relations work; further improvement to working methods and continuing reform efforts; as well as shoring up our financial basis. On this last matter, it recalled that, in accordance with the provision of Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention, the contributions to the World Heritage Fund are a legal obligation.

The report stressed the important debates concerning the adoption of the "Policy Document for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention", and recalled that this Document provides guidance for States Parties to mainstream sustainable development principles in their national processes related to World Heritage and that it represents a first step towards the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the implementation processes of the 1972 Convention. Finally, it encouraged States Parties - on a voluntary basis - to not submit nominations for inscription on the World Heritage List during their term on the World Heritage Committee.

Le Président remercie la Délégation du Brésil et félicite M. Marcelo Dantas da Costa pour le travail accompli. Après avoir noté qu'il n'y avait pas de commentaire particulier sur ce sujet, le Président indique que le Comité prend note de ce Rapport.

Le Président clos le **Point 3** de l'Ordre du jour.

**ITEM 4 REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE WORLD HERITAGE
COMMITTEE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD HERITAGE
COMMITTEE**

Document: 39C/REP/19
No Draft Resolution

Le **Président** rappelle à l'Assemblée générale que le Comité a eu l'honneur d'être présidé pendant l'année écoulée par Son Excellence le **Professeur Jacek Purchla** (Pologne) qui va présenter à l'Assemblée le Rapport du Comité sur ces activités.

The **Chairperson** of the 41st Session of the World Heritage Committee informed the General Assembly about the activities and decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee since the last General Assembly. He started by congratulating the newly elected Director-General as well as thanking Ms. Irina Bokova for her continuous leadership during her mandate. He also thanked the 12 outgoing members of the World Heritage Committee (Croatia, Finland, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, and Viet Nam) for their service and support to the Committee.

The **Chairperson** noted that, as of May 2017, there are 193 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, including South Sudan Timor-Leste who recently joined the *Convention*. He recalled that the Committee inscribed 42 new properties on the World Heritage List in 2016 and 2017, and that subsequently, the total number of properties on the List as of July 2017 stands at 1073 (832 cultural, 206 natural, and 35 mixed) located in 167 States Parties. He further recalled that, as of July 2017, the total number of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger was standing at 54. Furthermore, the Chairperson noted that 310 State of conservation reports were examined during the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) and the 41st session held in Krakow last July. In this regard, he recalled that proper conservation of World Heritage Sites is a major factor in propagating best practices for cultural and natural heritage protection on a much wider scale.

Furthermore, the Report underlined that the session in Krakow articulated the significance of three major actors for World Heritage: site managers, the civil society and young people. It was also noted that during its last two sessions, the World Heritage Committee discussed matters of Governance with the aim to enhance decision-making as well as to improve and streamline the working methods of the Governing Bodies of the 1972 *Convention*. Furthermore, the Chairperson recalled the steps taken towards revising the Operational Guidelines, especially regarding nominations and Tentative Lists. He also recalled that the Policy on integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the *World Heritage Convention*, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its 20th session, has also developed over the intervening years.

Finally, the **Chairperson** underlined the unprecedented challenges and threats that the cultural and natural heritage are facing, such as natural disasters, deliberate destruction of heritage, intolerance and violence. Thereunder, he reminded the States Parties reluctant to see their properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, that this inscription

enables the Committee to alert the international community to these challenges and threats, carrying out a coherent, coordinated response. He regretted the politicization of the debates that are taking precedence over expertise, technical and scientific-based decisions and called for dialogue in a spirit of mutual understanding. The Chairperson highlighted the actions taken to enhance and facilitate dialogue, communication, transparency and accountability throughout the nomination processes -in particular on terms of consultation and dialogue between Advisory Bodies and States Parties, and reminded that much greater effort is still needed to avoid rejections of Advisory Bodies' recommendations.

Au nom de l'Assemblée générale, le **Président** félicite le Professeur Purchla pour son Rapport et pour la qualité de sa présidence au cours de l'année écoulée. Il lui demande de transmettre également les félicitations de l'Assemblée à **S. E. Mme Lale Ülker** (Turquie) pour sa Présidence de la 40e session du Comité (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016).

The **Chairperson** closed Item 4 of the Agenda.

ITEM 5 ELECTIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Documents: WHC/17/21.GA/5
WHC/17/21.GA/INF.5A
WHC/17/21.GA/INF.5B

Draft Resolution: **21 GA 5**

Le **Président** informe que le Règlement intérieur de l'Assemblée générale a été mis à jour et qu'il est disponible dans toutes les langues officielles.

Le **Président** rappelle que 12 membres du Comité achèvent leur mandat lors de cette session de la Conférence générale et que 9 membres du Comité resteront en fonction jusqu'à la fin de la 40e session de la Conférence générale en 2019. Il rappelle que l'Assemblée générale, en 2015, a décidé que le siège flottant serait alloué au Groupe III en 2017, et ferait ensuite l'objet d'une rotation entre les Groupes III et IV à chaque session. Ainsi, le siège flottant est attribué au Groupe III à la 21^e session, et sera attribué au Groupe IV à la 22^e session en 2019.

Le Président précise que le premier scrutin de cette session portera sur les **sièges alloués aux groupes électoraux**. Il rappelle que, considérant la composition actuelle du Comité du patrimoine mondial, et conformément à l'article 14.1(c) du Règlement intérieur, **ce scrutin ne portera que sur les sièges alloués vacants pour les Groupes I, II, III et IV**. En effet, 4 membres du Comité représentant du Groupe Va et 2 membres du Comité représentant du Groupe Vb restent en fonction jusqu'en 2019, le nombre de sièges alloués pour ces deux groupes est déjà atteint. Le Président informe l'Assemblée les scrutins pour les sièges alloués aux Groupes I, II, III et IV auront lieu simultanément et que les bulletins de vote avec les candidats pour chacun de ces quatre groupes sont imprimés sur une seule et même page. Par ailleurs, le Président rappelle l'article 14.1(d) du Règlement intérieur qui stipule qu'à « *chaque élection, un examen sera fait pour s'assurer qu'au moins un État partie qui n'a jamais siégé soit élu comme membre du Comité du patrimoine mondial* ».

Le **Président** invite le Secrétariat à expliquer la procédure des élections.

The Secretariat provided the practical details concerning the elections.

Le **Président** informe l'Assemblée que Mme Lehn Petersen (Danemark) et M. Nguyen Tuan (Vietnam) ont accepté d'être scrutateurs pour ce processus électoral et invite les Etats parties à se rendre en Salle VI et VII pour procéder au vote.

The meeting was closed.

FIRST DAY – Tuesday, 14 November 2017
SECOND MEETING
3 pm – 6 pm
Chairperson: H.E. Mr. ADRIAN CIOROIANU (Romania)

ITEM 5 ELECTIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Documents: *WHC/17/21.GA/5*
 WHC/17/21.GA/INF.5A
 WHC/17/21.GA/INF.5B

Draft Resolution: **21 GA 5**

The **Chairperson** announced the results of the ballot for the allocated seats for Group I, II, III and Group IV:

Results for the Allocated seats (Total votes: **170** - Valid votes: **163** - Invalid votes: **7**)

Group I

Norway: **154**

Spain: **157**

Group II

Bosnia and Herzegovina: **73**

Hungary: **67**

Ukraine: **20**

Group III

Brazil: **136**

Guatemala: **125**

Saint Kitts and Nevis: **76**

Group IV

Australia: **119**

China: **128**

Kyrgyzstan: **46**

Myanmar: **33**

The **Chairperson** declared the following States Parties elected to the World Heritage Committee for **Group I: Norway** and **Spain**, for **Group II: Bosnia and Herzegovina**, for **Group III: Brazil** and **Guatemala** and for **Group IV: Australia** and **China**.

Results for the Open seats (Total votes: **164** - Valid votes: **163** – Invalid votes: **1** – Majority: **92**)

Bahrein: **121**

Hungary: **119**

Kyrgyzstan: **93**

Myanmar: **71**

Saint Kitts and Nevis: **97**

Uganda: **107**

Ukraine: **90**

The **Chairperson** declared the following States Parties elected to the World Heritage Committee: **Bahrein, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Saint Kitts and Nevis** and **Uganda**.

The Delegation of Bahrein thanked all the countries that voted for Bahrein and thanked also the Arab Group that supported the candidature of Bahrein to the World Heritage Committee. The Delegation took this opportunity to inform the General Assembly that Bahrein has the great pleasure to invite the Committee to hold its 42nd session in Bahrein in 2018.

The Draft Resolution **21 GA 5** was adopted as amended.

The Chairperson closed **Item 5** of the Agenda

SECOND DAY – Wednesday, 15 November 2017
THIRD MEETING
10 am – 1 pm
Chairperson: H.E. Mr. ADRIAN CIOROIANU (Romania)

ITEM 6 EXAMINATION OF THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND, INCLUDING THE STATUS OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF STATES PARTIES

Documents: WHC/17/21.GA/6
WHC/17/21.GA/INF.6.Rev

Draft Resolution: 21 GA 6

Le **Président** invite l'Assemblée générale à examiner le point 6 de l'ordre du jour.

The **Representative of the Bureau of Financial Management** gave a brief introduction on the financial statements of the World Heritage Fund. Two sets of financial statements were presented: the first one covering the 2014-2015 biennium, which required the approval of the General Assembly and the second set of interim Financial Statements as of 30 June 2017, only for information purposes with an expenditure rate of 81% of the Approved Expenditure Plan. He indicated that the sets of financial statements were presented in a consistent manner with prior periods, and that expenditure included amounts for goods and services delivered in the financial period as well as outstanding legal obligations/commitments. The Representative stated that in the statement of assets and liabilities, the cash balance was of \$6.5M and liabilities of \$1.1M relating to unliquidated obligations. He further presented a document on the updated status of State Parties contributions as of 9 November 2017 (document WHC/17/21.GA/INF.7), which shows an outstanding balance of \$716,000 as compared to \$209,000 at the same period of the biennium two years ago. He emphasized that this is a significant increase of the unpaid contributions (\$507,000). The Representative indicated that in terms of compulsory assessed contributions, 112 State Parties were up-to-date with their contributions to the World Heritage Fund and 68 State Parties were in arrears (about one State Party out of three is not up-to-date with its contributions). Regarding assessed voluntary contributions, 2 State Parties have not made any payments in 2017. The Representative concluded by calling on State Parties to pay their contributions on time as this could have a significant impact on the implementation of the activities of the Fund.

The Delegation of **Palestine** asked the Secretariat to clarify why the arrears of the voluntary contributions of the United States of America of US\$ 718,000 remained the same for two consecutive years.

The **Director of the Bureau for Financial Management**, in response to the question raised by the Delegation of Palestine, clarified that the account of the United States of America opted for the voluntary assessed contribution, not compulsory assessed contribution. He indicated that what is recorded in the financial statements as receivables are those, which are assessed voluntary contributions.

The Draft Resolution **21 GA 6** was adopted.

The Chairperson closed **Item 6** of the Agenda.

ITEM 7 DETERMINATION OF THE AMOUNT OF THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 16 OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

*Documents: WHC/17/21.GA/7
 WHC/17/21.GA/INF.7*

Draft Resolution: 21 GA 7

The **Chairperson** indicated that the next item on the agenda is **Item 7** regarding the determination of the amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention. He gave the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to present the document.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** indicated that the General Assembly shall determine the amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund, applicable to all States Parties according to Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention. She indicated that over the past years the sustainability of the Fund has been one of the most critical issues of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. She recalled that the income of the World Heritage Fund comes from the contribution that State Parties are bound to pay according to Article 16, the amount that represents 1% of the contributions due to UNESCO. She further noted that this income would not increase in the future. The Director of the Centre recalled the unsustainability of the current financial situation, emphasized that the considerable delay of the payment of assessed contributions by States Parties seriously limits the implementation of activities decided by the World Heritage Committee, and added that the supplementary voluntary contributions remain important but insufficient. She also mentioned two information documents in the context of resource mobilization and optimization of resources. First, the Information Document which presents the results of “the online consultation survey on a voluntary annual fee by the World Heritage properties”, and second, the Comparative Mapping Study of the forms and models for use of advisory services by other international instruments and programmes that was carried out by IOS. In terms of the discussion of the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund and further to the recommendation of the ad-hoc Working Group, the Committee adopted a Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund that integrates a set of complementary short-, medium-, and long-term actions, which can lead to a more desirable level of funding and efficiency. She further informed that at its 41st session, the Committee decided to extend the mandate of the ad-hoc working group to cover the examination of some of the measures included in the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund. The Director of the Centre also briefly addressed the “MarketPlace” fundraising Initiative that was launched by the World Heritage Centre during a side-event at the 41st session of the Committee. The “MarketPlace” for World Heritage is an online platform where donors can find a wide range of exciting and innovative World Heritage projects to fund. Currently 20 projects are available online with focus areas on Africa and Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), Youth and Heritage, Heritage in Danger and other projects that will beneficiate to a more global WH community. She further informed that the Centre plans a communication campaign to promote the MarketPlace on UNESCO Social Media such as Twitter, Instagram with the hashtag **#Give2WorldHeritage** to the millions of followers.

The Delegation of the **Philippines** highlighted that the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund is a serious issue and that the development of the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund envisions a proactive role of the World Heritage Committee to increase resource mobilization. It underlined that the Roadmap represents a paradigm shift through which the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund would become a shared responsibility. The Delegation commended the World Heritage Centre for presenting the new “Marketplace” at a side-event of the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee (Krakow, 2017) as well

as the related webpage. The Delegation considered a legally more binding approach as a long-term measure to ensure the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund. Finally, the Delegation indicated it would propose some amendments at the time of the adoption of the Draft Resolution.

The Delegation of **Estonia** thanked the ad-hoc working group for developing the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund, which would show careful consideration and creative thinking such as for the new “Marketplace”. The Delegation commented that one of the reasons for the lack of results would be because if there were so many options, the easiest one would be to opt out. In this respect, the Delegation welcomed the suggestion to double the contribution to the World Heritage Fund voluntarily as suggested in the Roadmap.

The Delegation of **Portugal** seconded the intervention of the Delegation of the Philippines and commended it for having guided the ad-hoc working group through these very challenging budget issues. The Delegation reminded the States Parties that the Director-General had stated that the *World Heritage Convention* should not be solely seen as a means to inscribe properties, but also as an instrument to provide, for instance, international assistance.

The Delegation of **Jamaica** noted the tremendous headway made by the ad-hoc working group and emphasized, in view of the urgency of financial affairs, the plea to the States Parties to pay their contributions in time. The Delegation proposed to strengthen the language of the Draft Resolution. The Delegation further thanked the Committee for having added by its Decision 41 COM 9A taken in Krakow Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as a priority group to benefit from the financial assistance from upstream process and advisory missions, since the SIDS did not benefit from voluntary contributions before.

The Delegation of **Norway** underlined that the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund is without doubt a pressing issue and that past decisions did not lead to the hoped results. The Delegation noted the recommendations of the ad-hoc working group and the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund, which has been adopted by the World Heritage Committee. It commended those States Parties who stepped up their contributions to the World Heritage Fund to two percent and stated that Norway is considering doing the same. Furthermore, the Delegation noted that Norway will support the World Heritage Centre and the African World Heritage Foundation through its bilateral cooperation agreement with UNESCO and contribute to the removal of World Heritage properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger. The Delegation finally underlined that everybody should take all efforts to work smarter and more cost-efficiently under the *World Heritage Convention*.

The Delegation of **Sweden** noted that the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund has been discussed for many years and remains an urgent issue. The Delegation welcomed the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund, which would provide a framework for concrete measures to improve the sustainability of the Fund. At the same time, the Delegation underlined that the Roadmap needs to take into account and complement processes among the Culture Conventions and UNESCO’s global fundraising strategy. It invited the World Heritage Committee to work on these challenges creatively and to identify cost-saving measures. In this respect, the cap of nominations was a step forward. However, it would be necessary to go even further. The Delegation stressed that the World Heritage Committee will need to consider completely new ways if the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund will not succeed.

The Delegation of **Turkey** highlighted that the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund is of major concern and welcomed the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund developed by the ad hoc working group. The Delegation stressed the need to find solutions for the ever-growing World Heritage List, which necessitates an increase in contributions to

the World Heritage Fund. Finally, the Delegation particularly welcomed the “Marketplace” as a creative way to address budget issues.

The Delegation of **South Africa** noted the concern about late payments of States Parties, but requested the World Heritage Centre to send original invoices as soon as possible to allow the State Party to comply with internal processes. The Delegation expressed its support for a legally binding protocol for payments to the World Heritage Fund.

The Delegation of **Hungary** emphasized that the dire situation of the World Heritage Fund remains a main issue and that more funds should be channeled to the conservation of World Heritage properties, which should be the focus of the work. The Delegation stressed the collective responsibility to make the payments to the World Heritage Fund in a regular and timely manner. It highlighted the States Parties projects in Africa and the need to implement the *World Heritage Convention* in this region. Finally, the Delegation envisaged the option of a new protocol for payments to the World Heritage Fund.

The Delegation of **St. Kitts and Nevis** echoed previous interventions and backed the interventions of the Delegations of Portugal and Jamaica regarding financial assistance, since Small Island Developing States (SIDS), while they did not yet benefit from voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund, urgently need upstream and advisory support.

The Delegation of **Australia** strongly endorsed the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund and commended the dedicated work of the Delegation of the Philippines for the ad-hoc working group to give the World Heritage community a realistic and plausible pathway forward. The Delegation seconded the proposal by the Delegation of Jamaica to strengthen the language of the Draft Resolution. Furthermore, the Delegation noted the challenge of supporting States Parties in improving their performance in conservation and stressed that, over time, the World Heritage Fund should be more focused on conservation efforts. The Delegation further noted the remarks of the Delegation of Sweden to limit the number of nominations to the World Heritage List more significantly. Finally, the Delegation urged the States Parties in arrears to make their payment to the World Heritage Fund, and called upon the States Parties to take steps to increase their contributions to the World Heritage Fund.

The Delegation of **Argentina** supported the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund. The Delegation stressed the need to look for long-term solutions, to be undertaken in the framework of synergies between Culture Conventions for example.

The representative of **IUCN** highlighted the work of the ad-hoc working group and the importance of the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund as an important mechanism to maintain the dialogue. In this respect, it stressed the importance not to lose momentum. IUCN further stressed that, while one can look into further efficiency savings, the main weakness is a lack of implementation on the ground as can be seen from the new IUCN World Heritage Outlook, according to which one third of natural World Heritage properties do not have a positive outlook. IUCN concluded in emphasizing that the Advisory Bodies would like to be seen as partners and that there are opportunities to also work with other IUCN partners to get out of the World Heritage box, to explore how to use the “Marketplace” and to set strategic priorities and to identify partners for direct support on the ground.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** thanked the Delegations for all constructive comments and particularly the Delegations of Norway and Sweden focused on the conservation of World Heritage properties, which fully correspond to the recommendations of the auditors. Referring to the intervention of the Delegation of Argentina on synergies, the Director stressed that a lot of work has already been done in this regard and noted however the associated increase in workload. Furthermore, the Director thanked the Delegation of Norway for announcing support to the World Heritage Centre and for the Africa region.

Referring to the intervention by Delegation of South Africa, the Director assured that the request for the original invoice could easily be addressed.

The **Director of the Bureau of Financial Management** expressed his agreement with all what has been said regarding the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund and the status of arrears. He agreed with the Delegation of Estonia that it is confusing, but noted that the General Assembly did not agree on limiting the options stated in the invoices. With regard to the intervention of the Delegation of South Africa, the Director informed the States Parties that the original invoice would be sent to all States Parties by December. With regard to the intervention of the Delegation of Jamaica, the Director confirmed that there is no specific date for payments under the *World Heritage Convention*. At the same time, there would be no problem to slightly strengthen the language of the Draft Resolution.

The Draft Resolution **20 GA 7** was adopted as amended.

The Chairperson closed **item 7** of the Agenda.

ITEM 8 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S "REPORT ON THE GOVERNANCE OF UNESCO AND DEPENDANT FUNDS, PROGRAMMES AND ENTITIES" (DOCUMENT 38C/23)

Document: WHC/17/21.GA/8
Draft Resolution: 21 GA 8

Le **Président** invite l'Assemblée générale à examiner le point 8 de l'ordre du jour qui concerne le Rapport d'avancement sur le suivi des recommandations du rapport de l'auditeur externe « Rapport d'audit de la gouvernance de l'UNESCO et des entités, fonds et programmes rattachés » et donne la parole à la Directrice du Centre du patrimoine mondial afin de présenter le document WHC/17/21.GA/8.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** outlined that the Item on Governance (Document 8) includes the follow-up to the Resolution 38C/101 and the results from the examination of the Recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group by the 39th General Conference. The Director indicated that the Open-ended Working Group will reconvene to examine the implementation of the adopted Recommendations on Governance.

The Delegation of **Denmark** thanked the World Heritage Centre for the report on the results achieved by the Open-ended Working Group of the UNESCO General Conference which examine amongst others governance practices of the 1972 Convention with a view to harmonize procedures and practices of all UNESCO's intergovernmental bodies and strengthen their alignment with the UNESCO's overarching priorities. The Delegation highlighted that the World Heritage Convention stands out from this exercise with good governance practice; it therefore encouraged the World Heritage Centre to contribute its knowledge and experience to the Handbook of Good Practices to be produced in the near future in the framework of this exercise. The Delegation noted that the General Conference recommended the Governing Bodies to submit formal inputs to UNESCO's overall draft programme and budget to strengthen their alignment with UNESCO's overarching priorities. The Delegation invited the World Heritage Centre to share their reflections on these recommendations.

The Delegation of the **Philippines** indicated that now that the General Conference has endorsed the recommendations of the open-ended Working group on Governance, there is a need for meaningful follow-up and implementation of its relevant recommendations. It noted also that during the work of the Working Group and its sub-group, the 1972 Convention was seen as a source of a number of good practices, notably Periodic Reporting, monitoring of sites and orientation meetings for new Committee members. It outlined general and specific recommendations of the Working Group which may be pertinent for follow-up (notably Recommendation 60, Recommendation 96, Recommendation 97 and Recommendation 105) and also noted that the World Heritage Ad-Hoc Working Group could play a role in reviewing and implementing these recommendations. The Delegation expressed hope for inclusive consultations and transparency and proposed that the Draft Decision might include a reference to the Decision of General Conference endorsing Decision of Working Group on Governance.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** thanked Denmark and the Philippines for their constructive work and for the analysis of the 1972 Convention and its use for best practices. The Director noted that the Secretariat would be happy to contribute to the handbook of best

practice and highlighted the extensive experience of the World Heritage Convention, which would mark its 45th birthday the following day. She noted that the Secretariat and the ADG would explore how to contribute to the budget issues in a manner supporting synergies with other conventions, and endorsed the proposal of the Philippines for the Ad-hoc working group to look at some of these issues.

The Delegation of the **Philippines, supported by Algeria, South Africa and Cuba**, proposed amendments to the Draft Decision, notably referring to the completion of work by the Open-ended Working Group on the Governance and the adoption by the General Conference of its recommendations of the Working Group on Governance.

La Délégation de l'**Algérie, soutenu par l'Afrique du Sud, Cuba, la Palestine, la Turquie** et le **Venezuela** félicite le Président pour son élection et pour la gestion de la session qui permet d'être en avance sur le déroulement de la séance. La Délégation remercie également la Délégation des Philippines pour l'amendement qui vient d'être proposé et souligne l'importance prédominante du Groupe de travail sur la gouvernance. La Délégation propose un amendement au projet de Résolution visant à confier au Groupe de travail ad-hoc établi par le Comité, le suivi de l'avancement de la mise en œuvre des recommandations du Groupe de travail sur la gouvernance. La Délégation souhaite également ajouter une demande au Comité afin d'envisager d'élargir la composante du Groupe de travail ad hoc et d'ouvrir les réunions à tous les Etats parties.

Concernant la proposition de changement de composition du Groupe de travail ad-hoc, le **Président** propose de demander l'avis du Conseiller juridique mais donne préalablement la parole à la Directrice du Centre du patrimoine mondial.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** recalled that with Decision **41 COM 12A**, the World Heritage Committee had decided to continue with the current composition of the Ad-hoc Working Group (members of the Committee and up to two non-members per Electoral Group), the Director further noted that that while the point would be brought back to the Committee, the current group has already been established.

The **Legal Adviser** noted that the composition of the Ad-Hoc working Group had been decided by the Committee and therefore could only be changed by the Committee, and also noted that there is no legal impediment to the General Assembly recommending modifications to the composition of Working Group.

La Délégation de l'**Algérie** remercie le Président et le Secrétariat pour les précisions apportées. Le représentant de la Délégation précise que sa proposition d'amendement ne cherche pas à dépasser les prérogatives du Comité, qui reste seul décisionnaire, mais de recommander au Comité de prendre en compte l'appel des Etats membres.

Le **Président** remercie les Délégations pour leurs différentes observations et félicite l'Assemblée générale pour l'avance prise sur le déroulement des travaux.

Le Projet de Résolution **21 GA 8** est adopté tel qu'amendé.

Le **Président** clos le point 8 de l'ordre du jour.

ITEM 9 FUTURE OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION: OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2012-2022

Document: WHC/17/21.GA/9
Draft Resolution: **21 GA 9**

Le **Président** invite l'Assemblée générale à examiner le point 9 de l'ordre du jour qui concerne l'Avenir de la Convention du patrimoine mondial. Le Président rappelle que la réflexion sur ces sujets a été initiée en 2009 et a fait l'objet de nombreuses réunions et discussions avant l'adoption du Plan d'action stratégique 2012-2022. Il donne la parole à la Directrice du Centre du patrimoine mondial afin de présenter le document 9 qui concerne le suivi de la mise en œuvre de ce Plan d'action stratégique.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** recalled that with Resolution 18 GA 11, the General Assembly adopted the Strategic Action Plan and the Vision to guide the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention over the decade 2012-2022. The Director outlined that the document provides an update on the implementation plan of the Strategic Action Plan following Decision **36 COM 12A** and Resolutions **19 GA 10** and **20 GA 12**, an updated table on implementation status on goals priorities and key outcomes defined in implementation plan as well as links between the two implementation plans. The Director further highlighted that the document was prepared in July 2017 and the implementation status refers to that time.

The Delegation of **Estonia** commended the clear and comprehensive document and noted that it refers to the elaboration of a global conservation strategy, further noting that the World Heritage Convention had already had a significant impact on the development of new heritage conservation tools worldwide, with many States Parties adding provisions or policies to their legislation. The Delegation welcomed the recent Committee Decisions on the reduction of the maximum number of annual nominations, stressing that it could be lower than 35, and further welcomed that inscriptions of properties without Management Plans is not possible. The Delegation also noted that the Action Plan highlights the need to underline the primacy of OUV in Convention and that inscriptions should meet requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines. The Delegation further commented that while divergences in opinion between the Committee and Advisory Bodies can be expected, the frequency in deviations from Advisory Bodies recommendations indicates that something is wrong. The Delegation finally emphasized the need for credibility and the problematic nature of premature inscriptions.

La Délégation de la **République de Corée** exprime sa plus sincère gratitude au Centre du patrimoine mondial pour l'élaboration du plan de mise en œuvre pour la vision de l'avenir de la Convention du patrimoine mondial et du Plan d'action stratégique. La Délégation souligne que la gestion et la conservation des sites du patrimoine mondial sont bien plus importantes que leur inscription. The Delegation emphasized the responsibility to preserve values as well as the physical nature of World Heritage properties, and that these values are not set in stone, but depend on historical, social and cultural processes and also experiences of neighboring countries. Recalling the Decision of the 39th Committee to inscribe the site of Japan's major industrial revolution on the List, and the requirement that the Government of Japan submit a progress report on interpretation to the World Heritage Centre by December 2017, the Delegation stressed the expectation of an interpretation strategy that will include mutually satisfactory measures. The Delegation called on the forthcoming Committee to pay

special attention to this matter at the 42nd session in order to ensure that Japan implements its commitment to the international community in this regard.

The Delegation of **Sweden**, recalling the dedicated work by States parties on the elaboration of the Vision and Action Plan, emphasized the need for it to draw increased attention. The Delegation also highlighted the worrying tendency of the Committee to deviate from the advice of the Advisory Bodies and the high rate of such occurrences. The Delegation underlined the threat this poses to the credibility of the Committee, the Convention and the World Heritage List, and the questions it raises about the use of the Advisory Bodies and of financial resources and recommended that the Committee revisit these questions. Thanking the Chairman for his report under Item 4 and successful Chairmanship, the Delegation also extended warm thanks to the State Party of Poland and, commending the positive involvement of civil Society and NGOs in the last Committee session, called on further exploration of the role of civil society in the implementation of the Convention.

The Delegation of **Norway** commended Australia for its efforts to include this programme and strategy into improving the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The Delegation noted with appreciation improvements in the implementation of the Convention as well as in the Upstream Process. It however underlined problematic areas such as inscriptions occurring without identified OUV and the disregard of Advisory Body recommendations notably. Emphasizing that the credibility of World Heritage is at stake, the Delegation stressed the importance of OUV and conservation and called for more resources to be directed at removing sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger, with a particular focus on Africa.

The Delegation of **Denmark** indicated that its intervention would also refer to Item 4, which was dealt with yesterday. The Delegation noted with appreciation the efforts and new ways of involving civil society in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in line with Goal 3 of the Strategic Action Plan. Recalling that the Executive Board of UNESCO is expected to develop proposals of opportunities for dialogue between Member states and NGOs. It undermined moreover that the 2030 Agenda clearly acknowledges the role of the civil society organizations. It mention that the UNESCO's leading role on SDG target 11.4 should reflect this ambition by showing willingness to take steps to enhance civil society contributions.

The Delegation of **Jamaica** commended the World Heritage Centre on the updates on implementation of the Strategic Action Plan. Recalling the critical importance of the Advisory Bodies to the work of the World Heritage Centre and the Committee and echoing the concerns of the delegates of Estonia, Sweden and Norway, the Delegation highlighted the need to demonstrate confidence in the Advisory Bodies and noted that the actual trend could risk the credibility of the World Heritage Convention. Finally, the Delegation acknowledged the work of civil society in key partnerships with the World Heritage Centre, with a special recognition for the excellent research of the WWF on World Heritage sites.

The Delegation of **Nigeria** expressed the wish to associate itself with the decision focused on training, research and capacity-building needs including those identified by Periodic Reporting. The Delegation echoed the Director of the World Heritage Centre's appreciation for Norway's support of the AWHF which helps promoting a representative World Heritage list.

The Delegation of **Serbia** welcomed the document noting that it highlights critical issues and endorsed the need for a better implementation of the Strategic Action Plan. The Delegation expressed appreciation for the World Heritage Site Managers Forum organized in the framework of the 41st session of the Committee and encouraged the continuation of such

opportunities for networking and exchange. Further noting that the civil society forum is a step forward in the implementation of the Convention, the Delegation emphasized that openness to civil society and NGOs enriches dialogue between Member States and the civil society as well as promotes and enhances understanding of shared heritage, and helps towards reduction of politicization.

La Délégation de la **Suisse** félicite le Président pour son élection et souligne l'importance de l'excellence scientifique comme principe fondamental de la crédibilité de la Liste du patrimoine mondial. La Délégation souligne que les ONGs sont des alliés importants pour soutenir ce principe grâce à leur action au niveau global. La Délégation rappelle que, selon la *Convention*, la responsabilité première et entière de la protection des biens et de leur valeur universelle exceptionnelle, ainsi que leur transmission aux générations futures, est la responsabilité des Etats membres. Elle indique également que les ONGs devraient être actives au niveau national pour attirer l'attention des autorités sur d'éventuels problèmes dans la conservation, la protection et la gestion du patrimoine mondial, ainsi qu'au niveau du Comité, en surveillant la conséquence et la rigueur technique de ses décisions.

The representative of the **Network of Natural World Heritage and Europa Nostra** expressed willingness at future engagement with the Committee and its new members. The representative extended thanks to the Chairperson for his efforts to give more visibility to civil society at the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee. Recalling Decision **41 COM 7** which invites the World Heritage Committee to 'continue exploring possibilities on how civil society can further contribute to enhance conservation of heritage on a site and national level', the representative encouraged the current and newly elected Committee members to continue such initiatives.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** noted her appreciation for the rich debate on critical issues on the politicization and credibility of implementation of the World Heritage Convention, especially regarding inscriptions. She highlighted the responsibility of the Committee to ensure that OUV is present, also noting the importance of considering Advisory Body recommendations with regards to the List of World Heritage in Danger. The Director also recalled that the Committee has been alerted to workload issues, in particular in cases of "rushed" inscriptions, which impact the workload of the next year's Committee. Reiterating appreciation of the support from Norway and other countries with capacity building in many countries including Africa, the Director also expressed appreciation for the progress of the last Committee session with regards to the involvement of civil society and assured that this would be taken up. Finally, she confirmed to the Delegation of Korea that the report from Japan is due to be received on 1 December 2017 and that the Committee will be informed of the implementation of the Decision by the State Party concerned.

Le Projet de Résolution **21 GA 9** a adopté.

Le **Président** clos le point 9 de l'ordre du jour.

ITEM 10 WORLD HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Documents: WHC/17/21.GA/10
Draft Resolution: **21 GA 10**

Le **Président** invite l'Assemblée générale à examiner le point 10 de l'ordre du jour qui concerne le patrimoine mondial et le développement durable. Le Président rappelle que lors de sa dernière session l'Assemblée générale a adopté la « Politique pour l'intégration d'une perspective de développement durable dans les processus de la Convention du patrimoine

mondial » et donne la parole à la Directrice du Centre du patrimoine mondial afin de présenter le document WHC/17/21.GA/10 qui décrit les progrès accomplis dans la mise en œuvre de cette Politique.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** underlined that the adoption of the World Heritage and Sustainable Development Policy was a landmark Decision. The Director then outlined the document, which describes progress made, World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies follow-up on integration of Sustainable Development in World Heritage processes and synergies with States Parties engagement with the 2030 Agenda. Noting that progress has been made following the Action Plan on Sustainable Development, she particularly recalled activities such as workshops in Vilm Germany in 2016 and 2017 with the theme of 'World Heritage and Sustainable Development – From Policy to Action' and the support of integration of Sustainable Development policy into ongoing work on World Heritage and Climate Change. The Director further referred to the range of activities being undertaken in this regard, including the mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Approach into the analytical framework of Periodic Reports, the UNESCO contribution to support Members States' implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 of the 2030 Agenda in particular in the UNESCO Global Report on Culture and Sustainable Urban Development presented to Third United Nations Conference on Habitat III in 2016. She also underlined the observed tendency of States Parties to set up economic development initiatives at the expense of sustainable sustainability. She recalled that it is therefore important to remember that the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties should not be compromised in the implementation of sustainable development policy.

The Delegation of **Spain** emphasized that culture and development is a priority of Spain's foreign policy. The Delegation echoed the need to reconcile the need to conserve OUV with challenges related to climate change and economic development. The Delegation also noted that Spain will host an international conference on this topic next year and anticipates the participation of World Heritage Centre.

The Delegation of **Germany** expressed thanks for all the implementation steps concerning Sustainable Development. The Delegation then proposed an amendment to the Draft Resolution mentioning the full respect of the OUV World Heritage sites, in accordance with the Decision taken at the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee.

The Delegation of **Sweden** confirmed Sweden's strong support for this policy and for bringing it in line with overall sustainable development objectives. Expressing appreciation of the important steps taken in implementation including capacity building and mainstreaming into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire, the Delegation highlighted the importance and cost-effectiveness of mainstreaming into regular practical procedures cost effective and encouraged the continuation of this work and a future report to the General Assembly, possibly based on data from the Periodic Reporting Exercise.

The Delegation of **Denmark** commended the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals and expressed appreciation for the cooperation between the World Heritage Centre and the Nordic-Baltic World Heritage sites, noting the major contribution these activities had to capacity building and awareness raising. Also noting with concern the observed trends favoring economic development over environmental sustainability, the Delegation underlined the importance of the involvement civil society and NGOs in this regard.

The Delegation of **Norway** noted the concern of the Committee on the need to achieve balance between protection of World Heritage OUV and pursuit of Sustainable Development and emphasized the priority of securing OUV. Noting the responsibility also to give World Heritage a function in the life of communities, the Delegation emphasized the need for

management that is meaningful for local communities. The Delegation further highlighted Norway's strong belief in Capacity Building and its agreement with IUCN/ICCROM in this regard, and expressed the hope that many States Parties will comply with the request to support Capacity Building activities.

The Delegation of **Slovakia** shared its experience in promoting sustainable tourism, through the new approaches of World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism. Highlighting the important strategies aimed at regional growth and the benefits to local and regional communities, the Delegation thanked the World Heritage Centre for supporting the country in improving World Heritage in Slovakia.

The Delegation of **South Africa** congratulated the World Heritage Centre on this important work and acknowledging the competing mandates of heritage conservation and specifically the extractive industries, emphasized the importance of working together with these industries, even in the framework of Capacity Building initiatives to promote mutual understanding of mandates. The Delegation then noted the omission of Category 2 Centres' role in the implementation of the Policy and proposed to add this to the implementation part of the draft decision.

The Delegation of **Barbados** noted that this was the single most important item under consideration at the General Assembly and Committee and further noted that Sustainable Development must consider the realities of all member States. The Delegation expressed support for synergies with other conventions and the engagement of this policy with the 2030 Agenda. Emphasizing that conservation and development should not have to compete with OUV but require planning and consideration of different perspectives both for nomination, conservation and management, the Delegation expressed that the World Heritage Committee should provide a model for this. Further emphasizing that this is particularly important for SIDs in the management of their scarce resources, the Delegation noted IUCN's comments on working with member states to achieve goals, and finally noted its support for Spain to initiate an in-depth look at these issues and South Africa's proposal for the inclusion of Category 2 Centres in the Draft Resolution.

Le Projet de Résolution **21 GA 10** est adopté tel qu'amendé.

Le **Président** clos le point 10 de l'ordre du jour.

Avant de donner la parole à la Directrice du Centre du patrimoine mondial et de clôturer la session, le **Président** félicite les Etats membres qui ont été élus pour le Comité du patrimoine mondial et ceux qui se sont portés. Il remercie l'ensemble de l'Assemblée pour la qualité des débats et l'efficacité des interventions, ainsi que la Délégation de Roumanie pour son soutien. Il exprime également sa gratitude à la Directrice du Centre du patrimoine mondial, au Secrétariat et à toutes les personnes qui ont œuvré à la préparation de cette session.

The **Director of the World Heritage Centre** thanked the Chairperson, the Rapporteur and all delegates for the constructive debate with its many comments and suggestions and expressed that she looks forward to working with the Committee. The Director of the World Heritage Centre thanked her own team and in particular the Policy and Statutory Meeting Unit, as well as the Assistant Director General for Culture and the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre. She also thanked the Bureau of Financial management, the interpreters and the room clerks.

Le **Président** clos la 21ème session de l'Assemblée générale des Etats parties à la Convention de 1972.

**Adress by Irina Bokova,
Director general of UNESCO,
on the occasion of the opening of the 21st Session of the General Assembly of the
State Parties to the World Heritage Convention**

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here.

As you can imagine, I speak today with a deep emotion.

This is the last session I have the privilege to attend as Director-General of UNESCO, and I wish to express my gratitude to all of you, for the long way we have travelled together.

Together, we have pushed forward the protection and preservation of our shared heritage.

As a result, the protection of heritage is today fully recognized as a key security issue, which cannot be delinked from the protection of human lives in times of conflict, in case of emergency – this was expressed in two recent and historical decisions of the United Nations Security Council – resolution 2199 adopted in February 2015 and resolution 2347 in march.

This is a major political achievement.

This is thanks to you, and thanks to UNESCO.

Today, the promotion of heritage and cultural diversity is fully recognized as an enabler of sustainable development, a driver for stronger economies and societies, providing decent jobs and a decent future.

This was not the case a decade ago, and this is a major political achievement.

It is thanks to you, it is thanks to UNESCO.

World Heritage embodies a revolutionary idea – the great humanist idea that people of all cultures and faiths can unite around places of “*outstanding universal value*”.

World Heritage is not just a list of marvelous sites.

It is neither a beauty contest, nor a political arena.

It is a vision for peace, carved in stone and cultural landscapes, with the power to change the minds of women and men, to shape a different future for all.

It embodies a radical choice.

Instead of distorting our heritage in endless disputes about what belongs to who, about which heritage is the greatest, the biggest, the oldest... here we choose to unite for heritage, because World Heritage is not about division, it is about building common ground.

This is a place for expertise and the highest standards of excellence; it is a place for dialogue and mutual understanding.

When a World Heritage site is destroyed anywhere in the world, we are all diminished, even if it is from another region, another period, another culture, another religion.

When we visit a World Heritage site anywhere in the world – in Jerusalem or Istanbul, from the streets of Krakow to the mountains of the Machu Picchu, we find the same fundamental human aspirations, we see how cultures influence each other, how they are irresistibly intertwined.

Since 2009, we have faced a number of challenges.

Too often, the implementation of the Convention was hampered by a lack of communication and dialogue.

That is why I launched the 'Thinking Ahead' initiative, bringing together States Parties, Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat together to review the challenges and opportunities facing the Convention.

We also worked together to facilitate dialogue, communication, transparency and accountability throughout the nomination processes.

In particular, we established increased consultation and dialogue between the Advisory Bodies and the States Parties throughout the evaluation period.

This process has proven essential to improving the implementation and transparency of this vital legal instrument.

All this will stay in the long term.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Chacun d'entre nous mesure l'ampleur des enjeux auxquels nous faisons face.

Ce sont des enjeux humanitaires et de protection d'urgence du patrimoine menacé, au Mali et au Yémen, en Syrie et en Irak.

La destruction délibérée de ce patrimoine est à la fois un crime, et une arme de guerre, une stratégie de nettoyage culturel, qui vise à la fois les vies humaines, les repères historiques, les écoles, les journalistes, les institutions du savoir et de la libre pensée.

L'UNESCO est pleinement consciente de sa responsabilité, et nous entendons l'assumer pleinement, pour coordonner l'action internationale, renforcer les politiques publiques, mettre en œuvre les programmes d'urgence, avec tous nos partenaires, avec tous les acteurs de la société civile, qui se battent au quotidien.

Partout dans le monde, les Etats se mobilisent pour enrayer le trafic illicite des biens culturels, stopper le financement du terrorisme.

L'UNESCO a besoin de votre soutien, politique et financier, pour répondre aux demandes croissantes des peuples dont on détruit le passé pour étouffer l'avenir.

Notre réponse doit être forte sur le terrain, et forte aussi sur le plan moral.

Plus la Convention grandit, plus notre responsabilité est grande d'en respecter les règles, les textes et l'esprit.

Personne n'oblige un Etat à inscrire un site au patrimoine mondial – et c'est librement, qu'à chaque nouvelle inscription, nous élevons le niveau d'excellence, d'exigence, de responsabilité, en vue de construire la paix.

Tel est l'esprit de la campagne *#unis pour le patrimoine* et son écho à travers le monde prouve combien le patrimoine peut mobiliser les consciences pour la paix, surtout auprès des jeunes.

Tel est également l'esprit qui nourrit la réflexion des Etats membres sur le rôle du patrimoine mondial comme moteur et facilitateur de développement durable, que vous avez placé au cœur de vos débats.

Dans cette enceinte, contre les forces de la haine, contre les forces du repli, nous voulons célébrer toutes les beautés, toute la richesse de notre patrimoine, qui porte nos identités, notre dignité, et dont nous sommes fiers.

Dans cette enceinte, nous sommes aussi les gardiens d'une conscience, qui aide chacun à s'élever au-dessus de l'histoire de son pays, de sa culture, de son origine, pour renforcer ensemble la trame universelle de notre humanité commune.

Cet esprit, cette conviction, nous devons la partager, et c'est l'appel que je lance aujourd'hui à tous les Etats Parties de cette belle Convention de l'UNESCO sur le patrimoine mondial culturel et naturel.

Avec tous mes remerciements, je vous souhaite un bon travail, une session fructueuse, pour l'avenir du patrimoine, et pour la paix dans le monde.