

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-first session

Naples, Italy
1-6 December 1997

Item 7.2 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of specific properties inscribed on the World Heritage List:

- (A) **Reports on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger**

SUMMARY

In accordance with paragraphs 82-89 of the Operational Guidelines, the Secretariat submits herewith reports on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

If appropriate, the Secretariat or the advisory bodies will provide additional information during the session of the Committee.

Decision required: The Committee is requested to examine the attached state of conservation reports and take the appropriate decision in accordance with paragraph 89 of the Operational Guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

1. The following reports on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger are submitted to the World Heritage Committee to facilitate the 'review at regular intervals [of] the state of property on the List of World Heritage in Danger' which is foreseen in paragraph 88 of the Operational Guidelines.

2. The Committee is requested to examine these reports and to take a decision in accordance with paragraph 89 of the Operational Guidelines which reads as follows:

"On the basis of these regular reviews, the Committee shall decide, in consultation with the State Party concerned whether:

- (i) additional measures are required to conserve the property;*
- (ii) to delete the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger if the property is no longer under threat;*
- (iii) to consider the deletion of the property from both the List of World Heritage in Danger and the World Heritage List if the property has deteriorated to the extent that it has lost those characteristics which determined its inclusion in the World Heritage List, in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraphs 46 to 56 above."*

3. To facilitate the work of the Committee, references are made at the beginning of each of the reports, to relevant sections of previous reports of the twentieth session of the Committee and/or the twenty-first session of the Bureau (WHC-97/CONF.208/4). In addition, each of the reports is accompanied by a draft decision for examination and adoption by the Committee.

NATURAL HERITAGE

4. Thirteen natural properties are included in the List of World Heritage in Danger. Reports on eleven of those sites were reviewed by the Bureau at its twenty-first ordinary session. The observations and recommendations of the Bureau (see WHC-97/CONF. 208/4) were transmitted to the respective States Parties via letters dated 15 July 1997.

5. IUCN submitted on 8 September 1997, detailed written reports on the following two World Heritage sites in Danger: Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Ichkeul National Park (Tunisia).

6. Information received from States Parties since the conclusion of the twenty-first ordinary session of the Bureau in June 1997, and from IUCN have been used in the compilation of the following reports on each of the thirteen sites included in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Srebarna Nature Reserve (Bulgaria)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.14

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.2

The Committee at its nineteenth session (Berlin, 1995) requested the Bulgarian authorities to submit a threat-mitigation status report in 1998.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following;

"The Committee requests the State Party to submit, before 1 September 1998, a status report on measures taken to mitigate threats to the site; the Committee requests IUCN to review that report and to recommend measures to the consideration of the Committee at its next session. The Committee decides to retain Srebarna in the List of World Heritage in Danger."

Plitvice Lakes National Park (Croatia)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.15

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.3

The Committee, at its last session (Merida, 1996), decided to retain this site on the List of World Heritage in Danger due to damage to the Park infrastructure and possible negative impacts due to over-visitation. The Bureau, at its twenty-first ordinary session held in June 1997, commended the Park authorities for having increased the total area of the Park to include the entire basin supplying the Park's lakes and streams, constructing a road outside the Park's north-east boundary to divert truck-traffic currently flowing through the Park, and training Park staff. As requested by the Bureau in June 1997, the Managing Director of the Park, by his letter of 11 September 1997, has provided a map of the enlarged Park area of 294.9 km²; about 100 km² of this total consists of new additions, which he proposes for inclusion into the World Heritage area. He has pointed out that freight traffic is now redirected to the road outside of the north-eastern boundary of the Park, and that foot paths and wooden bridges for visitors have been reconstructed; in the summer of 1997, the Park had successfully admitted and managed 270,000 visitors using of educational guided tours. The construction of a new sewage system will commence soon. The Director's view that Plitvice Lakes should no longer remain in the List of World Heritage in Danger, has been endorsed, via a letter dated 18 September 1997, by the Croatian Permanent Delegate to UNESCO to the Centre.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following:

"The Committee commends the Croatian authorities for having undertaken measures to repair damage to the Park's infrastructure. The Committee decides to remove Plitvice from the List of World Heritage in Danger. The Committee requests the Park management to expedite the reconstruction of the sewage system. In accordance with paragraph 66 of the Operational Guidelines, the Committee invites Croatia to nominate the extension of 100 km², about 33% of the new area of 294 km², using standard nomination procedures as set out in paragraph 64 of the Operational Guidelines."

Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of Congo)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.22

WH Bureau twenty-first session para IV.4

IUCN has provided a 4-page report, including a map showing locations of major battles, refugee camps and rebel activity in relation to Virunga and three other World Heritage sites in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The situation in and around Virunga is unstable with militia groups threatening human and wildlife populations. Aerial census of wildlife populations has not been undertaken since 1995; there are frequent reports of deforestation, poaching and illegal gold mining in the Park. Many automatic weapons left behind by fleeing soldiers have been claimed by local inhabitants and poachers and greatly endanger the life of the small number of Park personnel attempting to carry out anti-poaching activities. IUCN has listed 14 recommendations for restoring the Park; however, it has noted that the high-level mission to Kinshasa, recommended by the Bureau at its June 1997 session, to remind the national authorities of their responsibilities under the Convention and determine the policy of the new Government on nature conservation, is the most urgent priority action needed at this time.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following:

"The Committee decides to retain Virunga in the List of World Heritage in Danger and requested the Director General of UNESCO to send a high-level mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo as soon as possible".

Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of Congo)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.37

WH Bureau twenty-first session para IV.4

Since the Committee included this property in the List of World Heritage in Danger, at its last session in December 1996, the eastern regions of the country where this site is located have become further destabilised. Infrastructure of the Park has been damaged and wildlife poached. The uncertainty surrounding the new policy as regards nature conservation puts all World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo under threat.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following:

"The Committee decides to retain Garamba in the List of World Heritage in Danger and requests the Director-General of UNESCO to send a high-level mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo as soon as possible."

Sangay National Park (Ecuador)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.16

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.5

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee reiterated its concerns regarding road construction, poaching and colonisation and its call for an Environmental Impact

Assessment (EIA) of the road construction project. The Bureau, at its twenty-first ordinary session in June 1997, was informed that colonisation in the Guamboya Valley and along the River Palora, and small scale mining activities had been stopped, a new management plan was nearing finalisation and that several conservation projects funded by WWF had begun. IUCN is currently studying, with WWF, the feasibility for fielding a site visit to discuss and design measures for mitigating impacts of the Guamote Macas road construction projects and other threats to the integrity of Sangay.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following:

"The Committee decides to retain Sangay National Park in the List of World Heritage in Danger and urges the Centre, in collaboration with IUCN, agreement with the State Party and possible support from WWF, to plan and organise a site visit to address the problem of the Guamote Macas road construction and other threats to the integrity of the site."

Simen National Park (Ethiopia)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.32

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.6

The Committee, at its last session (Merida, 1996), included this site in the List of World Heritage in Danger, on the basis of the findings of a technical mission to the site and IUCN reports, and approved a sum of US\$ 30,000 for a meeting with stakeholders and donors, scheduled to be held in April 1997. The Bureau, at its twenty-first session in June 1997, learnt that the Regional Authorities in Bahir Dar, where Simen National Park is located, had disagreed with the Committee's decision to declare Simen as a World Heritage site in Danger; hence, they had indefinitely postponed the meeting of the stakeholders and donors and called upon the Central Government authorities in Addis Ababa to organise a discussion forum with UNESCO with a view to reversing the Committee's decision. The Bureau acknowledged the possibility that the views of the Regional Government in Bahir Dar may not have been accurately reflected when the Committee decided to include Simen National Park in the List of World Heritage in Danger. As requested by the Bureau, the Centre discussed the matter with the Ambassador of Ethiopia to France and the Permanent Delegate of Ethiopia to UNESCO, His Excellency, Mr. Mulugeta Eteffa, and sought his assistance in encouraging the Ethiopian authorities to view the Committee's decision in a positive light and to proceed with the convening of the meeting of the stakeholders and donors. Ambassador Eteffa was in agreement with the fact that the Committee's decision must be viewed positively, and had agreed to discuss the matter with relevant authorities during his visit to Ethiopia during September-October 1997.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to review new information that may be available at the time of its session and decide whether or not Simen National Park needs to be retained in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve (Guinea/Côte d'Ivoire)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.17

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.7

At the time of the last session of the Committee (Merida, 1996), UNESCO's Legal Affairs Office was considering a proposal for setting up an "International Foundation for Mount Nimba". The Bureau, at its twenty-first session in June, 1997, was informed that such a foundation cannot be created by UNESCO but could be set up under the national legislation of suitable a State Party, following the example of the Swiss Foundation established for Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania. Moreover, an earmarked contribution for Mount Nimba may be set aside under a special account of the World Heritage Fund or be set up as a separate 'Funds-in-Trust' similar to the World Heritage Fund. However, the Bureau noted that the mining companies expected to contribute to the Fund are not yet ready to launch the initiative and the Minister of Environment of Guinea had requested that Mount Nimba be retained in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following:

"The Committee decides to retain Mount Nimba in the List of World Heritage in Danger and requests the State Party and the Centre to contact relevant mining companies to know more details of their interest and willingness to set up an international foundation."

Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.33

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.8

The Committee, at its last session (Merida, 1996), included this site in the List of World Heritage in Danger, and requested the State Party to implement the eleven-point corrective action plan that had been endorsed by the Minister for the Environment of Honduras. The Bureau at its twenty-first session, in June 1997, was informed that a revised budget breakdown for the US\$ 30,000 approved by the Bureau in 1996 had not yet been received and that new conservation projects were being initiated in co-operation with conservation organisations and bi-lateral donors. The Sub-Secretary for the Environment of Honduras, via letter of 12 September 1997, has provided a description of the proposed use of the US\$ 30,000 approved by the Bureau in 1996: to be used mainly for equipment purchase and travel, per-diem and medical expenses of staff who will gather demographic, socio-economic and other necessary data from the different management zones of the World Heritage site and for communicating and disseminating information about the Reserve among local people. The funds provided by the Bureau will form a component of the larger GTZ-KFW (Germany) project, which during its preparatory phase of one-year, foresees the elaboration of a management plan as a priority activity. Together with the 5-year implementation phase, the 6-year social forestry project is expected to provide US\$ 13 million (or 23 million German marks) for Rio Platano and surrounding areas.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following:

"The Committee commends the Honduran and German authorities for launching a large scale programme for strengthening the conservation of Rio Platano. The Committee retains the site in the List of World Heritage in Danger and requests the Centre, in collaboration with IUCN, to plan a site visit during early 1999 to review the state of conservation of Rio Platano."

Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.18

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.9

At the time of its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee had noted that a site visit to Manas was foreseen in January 1997. On the basis of this site visit, jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) of India and the World Heritage Centre, between 20 and 23 January 1997, a state of conservation of report was prepared and submitted for review by the Bureau at its twenty-first session in June 1997. The Bureau noted that damage to infrastructure and poaching of wildlife had peaked during 1992-93 and had severely affected staff morale. However, the Bureau was happy to note that the situation in the area had improved and that staff has established access to all parts of the Sanctuary; nevertheless, the Bureau, in accordance with the wish of the Indian Government recommended that the Committee retain Manas in the List of World Heritage in Danger. MOEF and the State Government of Assam had elaborated a 2-3 year rehabilitation plan, at a total cost of US\$ 2,135,000, of which US\$ 235,000 was requested as emergency assistance from the World Heritage Fund. The Bureau approved an initial grant of US\$ 75,000, for the purchase of three vehicles, two boats and 55 wireless communication sets and recommended that the Committee consider approving additional amounts of the US\$ 235,000 requested by the Indian authorities subject to satisfactory use of the US\$ 75,000 provided, and written documentation on counterpart Indian funds disbursed for strengthening the conservation of Manas Wildlife Sanctuary.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to review information on progress with regard to the implementation of the emergency assistance project at the time of its session and the Bureau's recommendation concerning the approval of additional amounts of the US\$ 235,000 requested by the Indian authorities as emergency assistance and retain Manas Wildlife Sanctuary in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Air-and-Ténéré Reserve (Niger)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.19

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.10

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee had noted that a Peace Agreement signed on 20 April 1995 had allowed for a detailed evaluation of the state of conservation of the site and the development of an action programme. The Bureau, at its twenty-first session, in June 1997, was informed of the findings of a site-visit

undertaken by CNRS/EHESS and the staff of the local IUCN Office. The Bureau noted that there were no security problems in the area, decline in wildlife populations was noticeable and that an analysis of the Reserve's situation, by a team including a competent ecologist, was needed. Furthermore, that a proposal to establish a 24 million ha Biosphere Reserve, with the World Heritage site forming the core, and parts of the buffer zones, had been favourably recommended to the MAB Bureau for inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Delegate of Niger, present at the Bureau session, was of the view that the state of conservation of the site had considerably improved and the site may be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger. A mission to the site is foreseen in the autumn of 1997.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to review information which may become available at the time of its session and decide whether Air-and-Ténéré needs to be retained in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Ichkeul National Park (Tunisia)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.36

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.11

The Committee, at its last session (Merida, 1996), found that the construction of two dams had limited freshwater flow, dramatically increased the salinity of the lake and marshes and led to sharp reductions of migratory bird populations. Hence, the Committee decided to declare Ichkeul as a World Heritage site in Danger and requested the Tunisian authorities to provide a programme of corrective measures to reverse the degradation of the site and alerted them to the possibility of the deletion of Ichkeul from the World Heritage List, if rehabilitation of the site is not possible. IUCN informed the Bureau at its twenty-first session in June, 1997, of the following recommendations of a Ramsar mission to the site in January 1997: Tunisian authorities provide a clear indication of the measures they plan to take based on several scientific studies already carried out; establishment of an agreement on the release of water from the dams; setting up of a central authority addressing all management issues, including the long term management of the Tindja sluice; repair of the sluices; filling up of the Joumine Canal to restore the Joumine Marsh; and continuous scientific monitoring of the Park's ecology. The Bureau recommended that the Committee establish a three-year time table to review efforts of the restoration of Ichkeul and, in the meantime, retain the site in the List of the World Heritage in Danger.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following:

"The Committee decides to retain Ichkeul in the List of World Heritage in Danger and recommends that the State Party implement the recommendations of the Ramsar mission and submit a threat mitigation status report, to the twenty-third session of the Committee, in 1999."

Everglades National Park (United States of America)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.20

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.2

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee noted significant progress made with regard to acquisition of land, refinement of ecological indicators, and generous Federal and State allocations of financial and human resources, but decided to retain this site in the List of World Heritage in Danger due to continued prevalence of threats. In response to the Committee's call to the State Party to share knowledge and experience gained through the restorative effort, the Park authorities are planning to convene an international seminar, in November 1997, to which representatives of other internationally important wetlands, including those which are designated as World Heritage, are expected to be invited.

Decision required: The Committee may review new information expected to be available at the time of its session and decide whether Everglades National Park should be retained in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Yellowstone National Park (United States of America)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.21

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.12

At its last session (Merida, 1996), the Committee commended the initiative of the President of the State Party to remove the potential mining threat to Yellowstone National Park, by offering a mutually to be agreed upon trade of land valued at US\$ 65 million, and requested the State Party to outline, before 15 September 1997, the steps and schedule for threat mitigation which could be followed. Since then, the Montana State Office of the Bureau of Land Management of the United States Department of the Interior, and the Northern Region Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed Cooke City Mineral Withdrawal and circulated it for public comment. The Final Version of the EIS and its Summary were published, in July 1997, incorporating over 100 changes made necessary by substantive comments received during the period when the draft was open to public comment. Subsequently, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Lands and Minerals Management and the Under Secretary of Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment have both signed, on 12 August 1997, the decision authorising the withdrawal of mineral entry from 22,065 ha near Cooke City, Montana. The State Party has informed the Centre, by letter of 23 September 1997, that the report requested by the Committee will be submitted on or about 15 October 1997.

Decision required: The Committee may review the additional information at the time of its session and decide whether Yellowstone National Park should be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

7. Nine cultural properties are included in the List of World Heritage in Danger. Reports on two of those sites were reviewed by the Bureau at its twenty-first ordinary session, held during 23-28 June 1997. The observations and recommendations of the Bureau (see Document WHC-97/CONF.208/4) were transmitted to the respective States Parties.

Royal Palaces of Abomey (Benin)

The twelve Royal Palaces of Abomey which are situated in a vast area of 44 hectares, are the shared responsibility of the Royal Families and the Heritage Directorate of Benin. Since 1955 this site received support from the PREMA Benin II Project, financed by the Italian Government. This project has permitted the restoration of the Abomey Museum installed in two of the twelve palaces of the classified site (Guézo and Glélé), as well as the conception and the implementation of a better conservation policy for the buildings. Preventive action has been taken; a maintenance manual has been prepared and recommendations for the management of the site elaborated. The training of craftsmen, including representatives of the Royal Families and personnel from the Heritage Directorate, has also been assured, thanks to funding from the World Heritage Fund.

Furthermore, the Abomey Museum has received funds from the Getty Conservation Institute, the Organizational Committee for the Francophonie Summit and funds granted by the Director-General of UNESCO to the UNESCO National Commission, which have permitted the restoration of the bas reliefs, the implementation of restoration work of several buildings and the reconstruction of another (Fagbassa Palace of King Guézo).

Although in the framework of the PREMA Benin II Project action had been undertaken for the benefit of the whole site, and in particular the collection of complete documentation (gathering of nearly 140 works and documents) with also support from the World Heritage Fund, the conservation activities only concerned the Museum itself, which is about one-fifth of the classified site.

The World Heritage Centre, in partnership with the PREMA Benin II Project, concerned by the state of conservation of the palaces, has furthermore completed the work carried out by a mission, in July 1995, to indicate the precise classified boundaries and to take into consideration the anthropological dimension of the site, which is very much alive.

In its report, the mission emphasized the need to establish a management plan for the whole site, including the officials of the Heritage Directorate (DPC); local associations, the Town Hall of Abomey and the Royal families. The Committee, having taken note in December 1995 of the recommendations of the above-mentioned report, "commended the Benin authorities and invited them to prepare, in co-operation with CRA Terre-EAG and ICCROM, a conservation and management plan to be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-first session (December 1997)."

Although the statutes of the management structure had already been defined, it was not yet operational.

A special effort should be made to allow for the clear expression of the original culture, its evolution in history and its present status. The initial framework for a conservation and management plan has prepared to be presented for discussion during the International Conference organized in September 1997, at the time of the termination of the PREMA Benin II Project, and which brings together 80 Benin and international specialists. However, in view of the size of the site, its complexity and the number of existing structures, this plan should be tested and revised before being presented to the Committee.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following text:

"Having taken note of the amount of work accomplished at the site:

- i) collection and analysis of documentation;
- ii) elaboration of a maintenance plan for the buildings;
- iii) training of craftsmen in co-operation with representatives of the Royal families;
- iv) consideration of the anthropological dimension of the site; site of living culture,

the Committee invites the Benin authorities on the one hand, to continue their efforts to present to the twenty-second session of the Committee the draft conservation and enhancement plan of the whole site, and on the other, to co-ordinate international technical and financial support from which the site could still benefit".

Angkor (Cambodia)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.24

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.14

Assistance provided by the UNESCO Secretariat to the Cambodian authorities is connected with the obligations undertaken following the inscription of the site on the World Heritage List and List of World Heritage in Danger. Therefore, UNESCO organized a legal expert mission in September 1997, to prepare the decrees for application and classification laws indispensable for the implementation of the Law for the Protection of National Cultural Heritage, which was promulgated on 25 January 1996, which contains important clauses against illicit traffic in cultural heritage.

The International Co-ordination Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor, of which UNESCO is the Secretariat, held a plenary session on 9 January 1997 and a Technical Committee session on 7 October 1997. It is recalled that the Committee ensures, in co-operation with the Cambodian authorities, the co-ordination and monitoring of international actions undertaken to preserve the site, conserve its monuments and protect its environment.

The balance of emergency assistance funds for the Temple of Pré Rup granted from the World Heritage Fund since 1994, continues to be used for the maintenance of the monument and the recording of structural anomalies.

Moreover, these anomalies can now be recorded thanks to the monitoring system installed by an Italian team. In spite of unrest in the region of Angkor in July 1997, the site on the whole, did not suffer any damage, although the materials of the teams were unfortunately pillaged. However, the work which was interrupted for security reasons has recommenced and is progressing normally. Due to these political events, negotiations concerning the tourist management of Angkor Park have not progressed.

The looting of monuments and illegal traffic in cultural property continues in the region. Of course, because of major efforts on the part of the Cambodian authorities, with support from UNESCO, in the zone of Angkor, numerous stolen objects have been seized and placed in safe keeping. The active presence of the heritage police on the site plays a dissuasive and repressive role. However, constant support is still required by them to meet this difficult task and numerous monuments and archaeological sites outside of the zone of Angkor continue to suffer from looting.

Thanks to the mobilisation of international support from UNESCO, ICOM and the media, many stolen objects have been returned to Cambodia over the past few years by their European, Asian and North American custodians.

International pressure should continue, however, and be increased if it is hoped to dry up the market for stolen and looted cultural property.

Further information from the Technical Committee meeting to be held in October 1997 will be made available at the Committee during the session.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to examine information that will be provided at the time of its session and take appropriate action thereupon.

Old City of Dubrovnik (Croatia)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.25

The Committee at its twentieth session requested the State Party to submit, by 15 September 1997, an overall state of conservation report, so the Committee may consider whether Dubrovnik could be deleted from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

At the date of preparation of this document no report had been received by the Secretariat.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to examine information that may be available at the time of its session and take appropriate action thereupon.

Timbuktu (Mali)

Mosques of Sankoré, Djingareyber, Sidi Yahia

A pilot workshop financed by the World Heritage Fund and organized by CRA Terre in co-operation with the Cultural Mission of Timbuktu, was held from 22 November to 20 December 1996. This project was based on the fact that the Mosques of Timbuktu are made of fragile materials which are regularly threatened by rare but violent bad weather and have only survived several centuries due to the annual maintenance carried out by the local population, under the direction of the Imman and the responsibility of the corporation of masons, and with funding from the wealthy personalities of the town for the more costly works.

This in situ conservation action falls within the framework of the training strategy for Sub-saharan Africa which was adopted by the 20th session of the Committee. The pilot workshop was concerned with three mosques and permitted the local teams (traditional masons responsible for the maintenance of the mosques, as well as higher level personnel: management committees, national, regional and local services of Mali) to strengthen their practical maintenance knowledge, launch complementary activities concerning the revitalization of the City and permit the inclusion of Timbuktu as a "Historic Cities" project, financed by a World Bank loan and which foresees the restoration and safeguarding of the mosques, the revitalization of cemeteries and mausoleums situated outside the City and the development of the tourist infrastructure.

The consultant report recommended the Mali authorities "to be prudent and vigilant" , because "ambitious" conservation projects risk destabilizing and even destroying certain aspects of a living tradition which allows the local populations to participate annually in the maintenance of the mosques. Thanks to the pilot workshop the major risks threatening the mosques have been avoided. However, it is advisable that, on a short term basis, an evaluation be carried out. Furthermore, it would appear necessary that a conservation plan be established to define the long-term conservation objectives for the three mosques.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following text:

"In accordance with para. 56 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the Committee invites the Mali authorities to:

- i) co-ordinate international aid for the mosques and the City of Timbuktu;
- ii) inform the World Heritage Committee, through the UNESCO Secretariat of their intentions to undertake or authorize in a zone protected by the Convention, major restoration work or new constructions, which could modify the value of the World Heritage site, and
- iii) evaluate in co-operation with the World Heritage Centre the effectiveness and sustainability of the work undertaken on the three mosques;
- iv) prepare a conservation plan for the three mosques;
- v) report to the Committee as its twenty-second session."

Bahla Fort (Oman)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.26

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.15

A new expert mission was scheduled for October 1997 to advise on the preservation of the Fort. At the time of the preparation of this document the outcome of the mission was not yet known.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to examine information that may be available at the time of its session and take appropriate action thereupon.

Chan Chan Archaeological Zone (Peru)

WH Committee twentieth session para. VII.27

WH Bureau twenty-first session para. IV.36

The Committee at its twentieth session requested the Peruvian authorities to submit, by 15 September 1997, a full report on the state of conservation of Chan Chan, including proposals regarding the future conservation and management of the site in order to enable the Committee to decide if additional measures are required to conserve the property.

At the date of preparation of this document no full state of conservation report had been received by the Secretariat. The Secretariat was informed, however, about a programme of re-location of population and farmers who are living within the boundaries of the protected area. The Committee, at its seventeenth session, indeed expressed the need to address the issue of invasions and land occupation in order to rapidly and permanently reclaim and secure the site's intangible zone. This programme was reactivated by the Peruvian Government in 1997 and has met resistance by some of the population. The National Institute for Culture of Peru submitted a detailed report on the programme and reported that of the 207 persons, 46 had been relocated, that agreement on relocation had been reached with 91 and that 44 would be able to remain on lands that had been traditionally used for agriculture. An ICCROM expert confirmed the credibility of this report as well as the need to secure the protected area of Chan Chan. He also stresses emphatically the urgent need for a management plan for Chan Chan in the context of regional planning and expresses ICCROM's interest in a continued collaboration in the preservation of Chan Chan as a follow-up to the adobe training course which it co-organised in late 1996 at Chan Chan.

In July 1997, the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee approved an amount of US\$ 20,000 under technical co-operation for the preparation of a management plan for the site.

In September 1997, the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee approved an amount of US\$ 50,000 under emergency assistance for immediate measures to protect the most valuable and vulnerable parts of Chan Chan against the devastating impacts the up-coming 'El Nino' phenomenon might have on the site.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to examine information that may be available at the time of its session and take appropriate action thereupon. Given the continuing threats to which the site is exposed, its continued inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger is justified.

Wieliczka Salt Mines (Poland)

WH Committee twentieth session para.VII.28

The installation of the dehumidifying equipment for the site, for which the Committee allocated an amount of US\$ 100,000 in 1994, is presently being completed.

Decision required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following:

"The World Heritage Committee requests the State Party to keep it informed about the outcome and results of this preservation project."