



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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

World Heritage

40 COM

WHC/16/40.COM/10A

Paris, 27 May 2016

Original: English

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

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Fortieth session

**Istanbul, Turkey
10 - 20 July 2016**

Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: Periodic Reports

10A. Progress report on the Periodic Reporting Reflection (2015-2017)

SUMMARY

This document is presented pursuant to Decision **39 COM 10B.5** and contains the progress report on the Periodic Reporting Reflection period (2015-2017) launched by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015). It includes the results of the Global Periodic Reporting Reflection Survey, the Terms of Reference of the Periodic Reporting Expert Group and the steps forward.

Draft Decision: 40 COM 10A, see Point IV.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting came to a close at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee (Bonn, 2015). It brought to light important efforts underway to improve the protection, conservation and management of World Heritage properties and helped identify key factors affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties.
2. At the same time, a number of issues concerning the process and format of Periodic Reporting have been identified by different World Heritage stakeholders (see Working Document *WHC-15/39.COM 10A*). Taking these into consideration and recognizing the need to further improve the modalities of the Periodic Reporting exercise and to update it in line with various evolving factors, the World Heritage Committee decided to enact a two-year reflection period from 2015 to 2017.
3. More particularly, by Decision **39 COM 10B.5**, the World Heritage Committee requested, among others that the comments of the States Parties be sought on several aspects of the Periodic Reporting exercise, preferably by means of a questionnaire and that a small expert group be entrusted with drafting an updated format of the questionnaire and proposals for improving the process, relevance, analysis of data. It also requested that a progress report be presented by the World Heritage Centre at the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO DECISION 39 COM 10B.5

A. 20th session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention

4. Further to the request of the World Heritage Committee, an item on Periodic Reporting Reflection was included on the agenda of the 20th session of the General Assembly. The General Assembly discussed the matter and by Resolution **20 GA 14**, highlighted the importance for all States Parties to actively participate in the reflection on the Periodic Reporting exercise and called upon them to provide extra-budgetary funding for it.

B. Launch of the Periodic Reporting Reflection Survey for States Parties of the World Heritage Convention

5. Gathering comments and feedback from States Parties was an instrumental first step in the Reflection Period. Therefore, a Periodic Reporting Reflection Survey was developed to invite States Parties to comment on various aspects of the Periodic Reporting exercise, including the process, format, use and analysis of data, relevance and efficiency. The survey was developed in-house by the World Heritage Centre in consultation with the Advisory Bodies.
6. To reduce overall costs and to increase efficiency and in view of ensuring maximum responses and straightforward analysis and extrapolation of data, the World Heritage Centre opted for a user-friendly online format.
7. The Periodic Reporting Reflection Survey (<http://whc.unesco.org/document/138640>) was officially launched on 27 October 2015 with an initial deadline of 27 November 2015. Following discussions on the Periodic Reporting Reflection process during the 20th session of the General Assembly (*WHC-15/20.GA/14* and *WHC-15/20.GA/INF.14*), the deadline for completing the online survey was extended to 4 December 2015.

8. Over 75 States Parties participated in the survey and provided useful feedback regarding the process and format, use and analysis of data, relevance and efficiency of the Periodic Reporting exercise.
9. Further to the analysis of the feedback and information received, a brief summary of the outcomes of the survey was prepared by the World Heritage Centre and shared with the States Parties, by way of a circular letter on 8 April 2016. The summary is available for download at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/pr-reflection/>

C. Outcomes and Analysis of the Periodic Reporting Reflection Survey

10. States Parties were asked to comment on several aspects of the Periodic Reporting process with a special focus on the following topics:

a) Relevance and Objectives of Periodic Reporting

11. Under this category of questions, the States Parties were asked to rate the importance of objectives of Periodic Reporting that were established at the start of the First Cycle of Periodic Reporting and are included in Paragraph 201 of Chapter V.A. of the *Operational Guidelines*. The majority of the respondents rated as very important Objectives 1, 2 and 3. However, Objective 4 which is aimed to provide a mechanism for regional co-operation and exchange of information among States Parties received a much lower rating.
12. While the majority of respondents stated that there should be no further additions to the Objectives of Periodic Reporting, there were numerous multiple States Parties from across the regions who stated that there should be further additions, modifications or amendments to the Objectives of Periodic Reporting. In particular, the respondents called for improvements to Objective 4, in terms of provision of examples of cooperation mechanisms between the local and national levels as well as communities, but also additions that take into account synergies with other Conventions and a tool to monitor the compliance with Committee decisions.
13. 84% of the States Parties indicated that the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting improved awareness and understanding of the requirements of the World Heritage Convention among national authorities and site managers. Additionally, 56% of the States Parties specified that the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting improved mobilization of stakeholders at site level in the monitoring and management of World Heritage properties.

b) Periodicity

14. A majority of the States Parties indicated that they are satisfied with the current timeframe of the Periodic Reporting Cycle and that there should be no changes to it. 85% of the States Parties also indicated that their national authorities were given adequate time (i.e. one year) to gather all necessary information to fill in the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

c) Training and Guidance

15. Over 80% of the States Parties stated that the World Heritage Centre had provided sufficient training and guidance to allow their national authorities and Focal Points to fill in the Periodic Reporting questionnaire and 80% of the States Parties stated that their site managers were given sufficient training to fill in Section II of the questionnaire.

16. The majority of the States Parties indicated that online resources, video tutorials, FAQs and other tools prepared by the World Heritage Centre were adequate for their national authorities and site managers. However, several States Parties also made a number of suggestions aimed at improving the resources for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting.
17. Overall, the States Parties made the following suggestions to improve training and guidance:
 - Translate the questionnaire and online resources in more languages;
 - Additional guidance information within the questionnaire itself;
 - Increase the number of training sessions for national authorities and site managers;
 - Improve the overall visibility of the training tools;
 - Increase the use of case studies to improve understanding;
 - Update video tutorials with subtitles in different languages.
18. Lastly, 54% of the States Parties stated that Focal Point workshops would be the most effective training method for national authorities and site managers followed by regional webinars and video tutorials.

d) Format and Content of the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire

19. 61% of the States Parties stated that the length of the questionnaire should not be reduced or streamlined. However, multiple States Parties provided very specific suggestions to improve, modify or amend different sections and questions within the questionnaire.
20. Furthermore, 80% of the States Parties called for more emphasis within the Periodic Reporting questionnaire on the presentation of positive achievements of States Parties.

e) Use of Data

21. States Parties were invited to rate the usefulness of the data presented in the Second Cycle Periodic Reports to achieve the overall objectives of Periodic Reporting. The majority of States Parties gave a high rating to the usefulness of data to adequately meet the objectives. States Parties also indicated that national authorities and site managers used data derived from the Periodic Reports for the following activities:
 - Improve management systems and plans for World Heritage sites;
 - Develop National Action plans regarding heritage protection and conservation;
 - Understand threats affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage;
 - Improve overall decision making and strategy;
 - Educate key stakeholders on factors that affect World Heritage properties;
 - Create baseline data for developing monitoring and evaluations systems;
 - Initiate dialogue to amend current national legislations concerning heritage protection and conservation;
 - Address deficiencies in management and improve implementation through increased communication between national authorities and relevant stakeholders.
22. In addition, 65% of the States Parties specifically indicated that their national authorities use the Periodic Reporting Action Plan as a tool to set national priorities, strategies and

policies for the protection, management and conservation of heritage. 28% of the States Parties also indicated that they use the data derived from the Periodic Reports for the purpose of fundraising.

f) Periodic Reporting Web Platform

23. 68% of the States Parties rate the ease of use of the online Periodic Reporting questionnaire as “Easy” or “Moderate difficulty”.
24. 89% of the States Parties are satisfied with the information uploaded on the website regarding Periodic Reporting. However, several States Parties made recommendations for the improvement of the Periodic Reporting web platform such as:
 - Improvements to the questionnaire to incorporate serial or transnational properties;
 - Special provisions for States Parties that are remotely located and have limited or no internet connectivity (e.g. Pacific Island countries);
 - Improvements to the online platform for saving information;
 - Offline copies of the questionnaire to be made available in several languages for better preparation;
 - Extension of number of character/word limits for open questions.

g) Financial Resources

25. 26% of the States Parties indicated that they would be willing to contribute to or finance Periodic Reporting workshops for Focal Points while 18% of the States Parties stated that they would be willing to contribute to/finance coordination and expertise at the World Heritage Centre.

h) Global World Heritage Report

26. 81% of the States Parties indicated that they would welcome a Global World Heritage Report at the end of the next cycle of Periodic Reporting.

D. Periodic Reporting experts group and reflection meetings

27. At its 39th session the Committee requested that “a small expert working group be entrusted with drafting an updated format of the questionnaire and proposals for improving the process, relevance, analysis and use of data, further to feedback of States Parties and outcomes of Reflection meetings, in accordance with Terms of Reference which will be included in the progress report to be presented to the World Heritage Committee at the 40th session in 2016”.
28. Further to the request of the Committee and to the outcomes of the Periodic Reporting Reflection Survey, the establishment of a small group of experts composed of several experienced heritage experts and statisticians - including experts from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and the Advisory Bodies experts - is in the process of finalization. In addition, a small team of Focal Points for World Heritage from different regions will assist the experts group in an advisory capacity during a consultation round.
29. Further to preliminary exchanges, the inception meeting of the expert group is scheduled in early June 2016 to discuss in detail the different aspects to be tackled and

to establish an efficient working methodology and distribution of tasks. Identified activities and tasks of the expert group will be carried out through a series of meetings in the course of the reflection period, as well as through online and off-line communication between meetings.

30. The Committee also requested that States Parties provide extra-budgetary resources to ensure a proper reflection, including through the hosting of Periodic Reporting Reflection meetings with the participation of representatives of States Parties of all regions. It is to be noted that despite the fundraising efforts of the World Heritage Centre in this regard, no funding has been made available at the time of drafting of the present document, nor have any invitations from States Parties to host Periodic Reporting Reflection meetings been received. The World Heritage Centre will continue to explore funding opportunities. If the situation does not improve, the possibility of organizing a second online consultation with States Parties instead of organizing a reflection meeting could be considered.

E. Terms of Reference of the Periodic Reporting experts group:

- Review the outcomes of the Periodic Reporting Reflection Survey and provide a short analysis of the lessons learned from the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting;
- Develop recommendations for revisions to the Periodic Reporting process and questionnaire, taking into account the key issues and priority areas for improvement regarding the process, format, relevance, main thematic areas (i.e. tourism, disaster risk, management, awareness raising, conflict etc.), training and guidance, use and analysis of data, and efficiency of the exercise;
- Develop recommendations regarding synergies with other cultural or biodiversity-related Conventions, in the framework of Periodic Reporting, with a particular focus on the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954);
- Identify monitoring indicators to improve follow-up on progress made by States Parties in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, following the recommendation of the Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-Setting Work of the Culture Sector;
- Develop recommendations regarding the integration of the Sustainable Development approach in line with the World Heritage and Sustainable Development policy and the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, within the framework of the Periodic Reporting exercise;
- Study the feasibility of a Global World Heritage Report, based on the outcomes of the reflection survey;
- Prepare an updated format of the Periodic Reporting questionnaire for presentation to the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017.

III. NEXT STEPS

31. As requested by the Committee, the results of all activities undertaken within the framework of the Periodic Reporting Reflection Period will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017, as requested by the Committee, including an updated format of the questionnaire and proposals for improving the

process, relevance, analysis and use of data, as well as a proposal of a revised version of Chapter V of the *Operational Guidelines* (Periodic Reporting on the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention) and Annex 7 (Format for the Periodic Reporting of the application of the World Heritage Convention).

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 40 COM 10A

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/10A,*
2. *Recalling Decision **39 COM 10B.5**, adopted at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015),*
3. *Also recalling that the third cycle of Periodic Reporting was suspended at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015) with the launch of a two-year Periodic Reporting Reflection Period, 2015-2017;*
4. *Commends the World Heritage Centre for the work undertaken, in particular with regards to the organization of the Global Periodic Reporting Reflection Survey;*
5. *Notes with appreciation the participation of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in the Global Periodic Reporting Survey and takes note of the Survey's results;*
6. *Takes note of the Terms of Reference of the Periodic Reporting Experts Group;*
7. *Reiterates its call upon States Parties and other World Heritage stakeholders to provide extra-budgetary resources to ensure a proper reflection, including through hosting Periodic Reporting reflection meetings;*
8. *Also reiterates its request to the World Heritage Centre to present for examination by the World Heritage Committee an updated format of the questionnaire and proposals for improving the process, relevance, analysis and use of data, as well as a proposal of a revised version of Chapter V of the Operational Guidelines (Periodic Reporting on the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention) and Annex 7 (Format for the Periodic Reporting of the application of the World Heritage Convention), at its 41st session in 2017.*