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TWENTIETH 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

Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: 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

SUMMARY

This document relates to Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention, according to which the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention shall determine the amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund in the form of a uniform percentage applicable to all States Parties. Further to Resolution **20 GA 8**, it also addresses the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund, the respective proposals made by the ad-hoc working group and the decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee.

Draft Resolution: 21 GA 7, see Part III.

I. DETERMINATION OF THE AMOUNT OF THE STATES PARTIES' CONTRIBUTIONS

1. In accordance with Article 16.1 of the *World Heritage Convention*, the General Assembly of States Parties to the *Convention* determines every two years, in the form of a uniform percentage, the amount of contributions to be paid by States Parties to the World Heritage Fund.
2. Article 16.1 of the *World Heritage Convention* further states that “in no case shall the compulsory contribution of States Parties to the Convention exceed 1% of the contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.” As per Article 16.4 of the *Convention*, the assessed voluntary contributions of States Parties “should not be less than the contributions which they should have paid if they had been bound by the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article.”
3. Considering the current situation and debates that are currently taking place concerning the regular budget of UNESCO for 2018-2019, it is unlikely that the current 1% of the contribution to the regular budget for the World Heritage Fund, as stated in the *Convention*, will change.

II. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND

4. Over the past years, the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund has been one of the most pressing issues of the *World Heritage Convention*.
5. Due to the steady increase of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, the World Heritage Centre encounters new challenges and strains. The number of properties on the World Heritage List has doubled over the past 20 years, whilst the average funds available for the conservation and promotion of sites has halved. Furthermore, the considerable delay of the payment of assessed contributions by States Parties severely limits the implementation of activities decided by the World Heritage Committee. The supplementary voluntary contributions are helpful, but largely insufficient. Almost two-thirds of the budget of the World Heritage Fund is spent on advisory services. Consequently, all thematic programmes are financed by extra-budgetary funds.
6. Despite the proposals of the Secretariat and the decisions and resolutions of the Governing Bodies, results remain very limited (please refer to the recent Decisions by the World Heritage Committee on this matter: Decisions [38 COM 12](#), [39 COM 15](#), [40 COM 15](#) and [Resolution 20 GA 8](#)).
7. As shown in the List of other voluntary contributions for the period 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2017 (cf. Document WHC-17/21.GA/INF.7), only four States Parties have provided unrestricted contributions. Australia and Turkey have doubled their contributions as per Option 1 of [Resolution 19 GA 8](#), paragraph 7. In 2016, only three States Parties (Monaco, Slovakia and Sweden) made supplementary voluntary contributions to the sub-account for enhancing the human capacities of the World Heritage Centre, which amounted to US\$ 262,283 as of 30 June 2017. Although Sweden made a significant contribution in 2016, the amount of at least US\$ 1,000,000 per year recommended by the General Assembly at its 19th session (2013) is far from being attained.
8. The sustainability of the World Heritage Fund was included within the mandate of the ad-hoc working group established initially by the 38th World Heritage Committee (Decision [38 COM 13](#), Doha, 2014) which has been reconducted by the Committee at its subsequent sessions. The group held regular intersessional meetings and reported to the Committee at its 40th and 41st sessions (Documents [WHC/16/40.COM/13A](#) and [WHC/17/41.COM/12A](#)).
9. In this context, as per the recommendation of the ad-hoc working group, the Committee endorsed options 1, 4 and 5 of [Resolution 19 GA 8](#) as well as the proposal presented to the 20th General Assembly in [Document WHC-15/20.GA/8](#) (paragraph 16 of [Decision 40 COM 15](#)).

10. Considering the importance of the timely and full payment of compulsory and voluntary assessed contributions as a legal obligation of States Parties, the group also recalled in its report to the Committee at its 40th session paragraph 9 of [Resolution 20 GA 8](#) related to potential measures concerning arrears, to be considered at the 21st General Assembly.
11. As per [Decision 40 COM 15](#) (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), the Secretariat submitted to the Committee at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017) two significant documents in the context of resource mobilisation and optimization of resources. First, based on the recommendation of the ad-hoc working group, which was endorsed by the Committee, the Secretariat submitted the outcomes of the online consultation survey on a voluntary annual fee by the World Heritage properties presented in Document [WHC/17/41.COM/INF.14.I](#). In this regard, the Committee at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017) invited States Parties that had responded positively to the survey, to make supplementary voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund. The Committee also invited the States Parties to continue consultations with their local administrations in charge of World Heritage properties, and to inform the Secretariat accordingly. Secondly, the Secretariat submitted a Comparative Mapping Study of Forms and Models for use of Advisory Services by International Instruments and Programmes, as produced by the UNESCO Internal Oversight Service (IOS) in Document [WHC/17/41.COM/INF.14.II](#).
12. Considering the fact that short-term measures have not produced any meaningful results and the pressing need for a holistic, integrated and long-term line of action, the group recommended to the Committee, at its 41st session, to adopt a more long-term and strategic approach on the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund over time (Decision [41 COM 14](#)).
13. In this perspective, the ad-hoc working group suggested that a more effective resource mobilization and efficient allocation of resources are complementary measures for a more holistic approach to sustaining World Heritage Fund. For this purpose, the group proposed to the Committee to adopt a Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund that integrates a set of complementary short-, medium-, and long-term actions to be implemented in a phased timeline (Decision [41 COM 14](#)).
14. The measures concerning resource mobilization include:
 - Short-term:
 - Holding of side-events during Committee sessions on “Marketplace” webpage, as basis for further developing Forum of Partners;
 - Continuation of voluntary fundraising measures endorsed by the Committee, with target of several (10 or more) States Parties doubling their annual contributions;
 - Voluntary fees from some sites;
 - Links on listed properties’ websites for donations to the Fund;
 - Support for increasing capacities of the World Heritage Centre, including for fundraising;
 - Comprehensive resource mobilization and communication strategy, integrating a revised PACT strategy, adopted by the Committee to expand donor base, including, as appropriate, civil society and multilateral funds and institutions;
 - Enhanced engagement of Category 2 Centres, field offices and local actors
 - Informal Core Group on resource mobilization.
 - Mid-term
 - Launch of Forum of Partners (as high-level or stand-alone event) with wider scope of donors and projects for greater impact and visibility;
 - If substantial progress not achieved, feasibility of Optional Protocol for States Parties that agree to increase assessed percentage of annual contributions submitted to General Conference for decision.
 - Long-term
 - Possible Optional Protocol to raise the current 1% ceiling for assessed contributions to the World Heritage Fund.

15. The measures concerning optimization of use of resources through re-calibrating current resources, functions and procedures include:

- Short term
 - Prioritization of conservation through action plans for sites on Danger List and those in need, with linkages to international assistance and Forum of Partners;
 - Analysis of the mapping study of advisory services implications.
- Mid-term
 - Assessment of the implementation of paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines; consider setting quota/ percentage for conservation activities.

16. At its 41st session the Committee decided to extend the mandate of the ad-hoc working group to include in its mandate the examination of some of the measures included in the Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund, namely:

- To consider the development of a comprehensive resource mobilization and communication strategy;
- To further examine the proposal to establish an Informal Core Group on Resource Mobilization, including its mandate and modalities;
- To study how to maximize the impact and scope of the Forum of Partners, and;
- To analyze the recommendations of the IOS Comparative Mapping Study and develop proposals in view of optimizing the use of the resources of the World Heritage Fund.

17. The ad-hoc working group will report on the outcomes of its work to the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session in 2018.

III. DRAFT RESOLUTION

Draft Resolution: 21 GA 7

The General Assembly,

1. *Having examined Documents WHC/17/21.GA/7 and WHC/17/21.GA/INF.7,*
2. *Recalling Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention,*
3. *Decides to set the percentage for the calculation of the amount of the contributions to be paid to the World Heritage Fund by States Parties for the financial period 2018-2019 at 1% of their contributions to the regular budget of UNESCO;*
4. *Notes the status of compulsory and voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund as presented in Document WHC/17/21.GA/INF.7;*
5. *Take notes of the recommendations made by the ad-hoc working group in Documents WHC/16/40.COM/13A and WHC/17/41.COM/12A and the related Decisions on the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund (Decisions **40 COM 15** and **41 COM 14**);*
6. *Reiterates the plea of the World Heritage Committee to States Parties to the Convention to pay their annual contributions by 31 January wherever possible in order to facilitate the timely implementation of the activities financed by the World Heritage Fund;*
7. *Invites States Parties to provide supplementary voluntary contributions to the sub-account for enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat to achieve the target of at least US\$ 1,000,000 per year, in total, as recommended at the 19th session of the World Heritage Committee.*