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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Forty-third session

**Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan
30 June – 10 July 2019**

Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: Periodic Reports

10B: Progress report on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting

SUMMARY

This document is presented pursuant to Decision **42 COM 10A** and contains a report on the overall conduct and coordination of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting including the preparation and start of the exercise in the Arab States region. It also includes information about the meetings organized with the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) for the National Focal Points and World Heritage site managers from the region, as well as additional information about activities carried out by the Secretariat to facilitate a State-Party driven approach as per Decision **41 COM 10A**. This report also details the preparatory steps taken for the commencement of the exercise in the Africa region in September 2019 and the early preparation undertaken by the Secretariat in the Asia and the Pacific region.

The web platform of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting can be accessed at the following address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/prcycle3>.

Draft Decision: 43 COM 10B, see point V.

I. BACKGROUND

1. Following the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting launched by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session (Krakow, 2017) with Decision **41 COM 10A**, it was decided that the World Heritage Centre should ensure a holistic approach across regions by providing the overall coordination, guidance tools and analysis, and facilitating a State Party-driven approach. To this end, the Secretariat was requested with Decision **42 COM 10A** to make available a set of training and guidance materials developed for a broad range of stakeholders and to ensure their wide dissemination, to encourage effective preparation and implementation in the regions, in particular in the Arab States region as the first one to report in the period 2018-2019.
2. The Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) offered to assist in facilitating the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Arab States region by organising regional meetings and providing targeted technical support to States Parties, in close collaboration with the World Heritage Centre.

II. PREPARATION AND START OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN THE ARAB STATES REGION

Preliminary preparation

3. A preparatory meeting with the Arab States delegations was organized during the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Manama, 2019) by the World Heritage Centre and the ARC-WH to present and discuss all relevant processes and stages of the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Arab States region. The role of the different stakeholders in the exercise was discussed and all participants welcomed the guidance provided by the World Heritage Centre and the commitment of ARC-WH to provide assistance and support as a key partner for Periodic Reporting in the region.
4. Further to the World Heritage Committee Decision **42 COM 10A**, the World Heritage Centre carried out additional language editing and concordance checking of the online Periodic Reporting questionnaire, to ensure consistency between the English and French versions.
5. ARC-WH provided support in the translation of the questionnaire into Arabic, to elucidate further understanding of the questions and concepts, especially for the National Focal Points and World Heritage site managers who are undergoing the exercise for the first time.
6. In line with the Committee Decision **41 COM 10A** and its call for a State Party-driven exercise and a holistic approach across the regions, and with a view to facilitating the States Parties and World Heritage stakeholders' preparations ahead of the Third Cycle, the World Heritage Centre developed a set of training and guidance materials.
7. The Secretariat brought further refinements to the training materials to allow States Parties the autonomy to successfully lead the Periodic Reporting exercise in their countries and in the region as a whole. The training materials, such as guidance and an index of key terms, responded to a number of issues identified during the Second Cycle. Primarily these materials aim to explain some complex concepts, to provide clarifications on the kind of information sought in specific questions, and to provide context and background to many of the thematic areas covered through linkages with publications, relevant World Heritage policies, documents and recommendations as well as external websites.

8. More specifically, the training material and tools that have been developed, updated or revised include:
- **Guidance** for the questionnaire to improve understanding. It is a dynamic and evolving tool, which reflects changing circumstances across regions and incorporates additional information such as explaining technical terms and concepts without making it visually heavier, as it is an optional extra. It can function as a capacity-building tool in itself, which can be used for training by national authorities and site managers.
 - A **list of key terms**, which supplements the guidance, providing definitions to terms used in relation to World Heritage, conservation or by the UN system, based on pre-existing published sources.
 - Two **animation videos** on the overall Periodic Reporting process and on the specificities of Section II of the questionnaire related to World Heritage properties. They are available in English, French and Arabic.
 - A “Site Managers’ **Handbook** for Periodic Reporting” describing the objectives, process and format of the exercise to a broad range of stakeholders in a concise manner, using clear and accessible language. The handbook was initially published in English and French and was translated and published in Arabic with the collaboration of the ARC-WH. In addition to the electronic format, more than 200 copies of the Arabic version of the handbook were printed and distributed to site managers during workshops and meetings.
 - A **Periodic Reporting Curriculum** was developed to allow Focal Points to carry out training of World Heritage site managers involved in Periodic Reporting. The curriculum brings together a large number of World Heritage resources, both pre-existing and newly developed and functions as a road-map to those engaged in capacity-building for Periodic Reporting.
 - **Frequently Asked Questions** on the most common issues raised during the previous cycles and further to responses received from participants and experts during the Periodic Reporting Testing Phase (April 2017).
9. All training material and tools referred to above are available on the Periodic Reporting Cycle 3 web platform: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/prcycle3>.
10. The World Heritage Centre ensured that all relevant information in relation to Periodic Reporting is communicated to all concerned, including States Parties and other key stakeholders, such as ARC-WH and UNESCO Field Offices in the Arab States region, who represent key partners in the reporting exercise.
11. In view of the start of the exercise, the Secretariat undertook a complete update of the records and contact details of the Arab States National Focal Points and World Heritage site managers participating in the exercise (July-September 2018).
12. Additional updates were made on the data related to the management systems, management plans and protective designations, so that all questionnaires could be prefilled with relevant available information before access was granted to the designated National Focal Points and site managers.

Start of the Periodic Reporting questionnaire completion exercise for the Arab States region

13. The World Heritage Centre started the Periodic Reporting exercise on 17 September 2018.

14. Helpdesk support was established at the Centre to maintain communication with the States Parties and to respond rapidly to core questions as well as to deal with technical bugs that arose during the filling of the questionnaire.
15. During the period between September 2018 - April 2019, the World Heritage Centre received about 85 requests via the dedicated Periodic Reporting email, or by phone calls from National Focal Points and World Heritage site managers. These were mostly technical requests such as questionnaire access and creation of passwords and logins, language change, export of the questionnaire to Word or to PDF formats, etc.
16. The dedicated helpdesk set up by the Centre proved to be crucial to the process. It allowed the Secretariat not only to continuously improve the technical features of the questionnaire through the feedback received from the Periodic Reporting stakeholders, but also to improve the communication between national Focal Points and World Heritage site managers.
17. To further enhance communication on Periodic Reporting with all World Heritage stakeholders, the Centre updated its Periodic Reporting web platform, especially regarding navigation and clearer links to other relevant World Heritage pages.
18. Since October 2018, the Centre produces a quarterly newsletter, which is sent electronically to all Focal Points, site managers and other stakeholders in the Arab States region, with information pertaining to the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States region (news and events, meetings, hints and tips on the Periodic Reporting questionnaire functionalities, etc.). Feedback has been positive with an increase in visits to the Periodic Reporting platform at every dispatch of the newsletter.

Periodic Reporting training workshops:

19. Several Periodic Reporting workshops were organized jointly by the World Heritage Centre and ARC-WH. From November 2018 to February 2019 two workshops for National Focal Points took place, one of them in Manama, Bahrain, 12-14 November 2018 and the second at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France, 26-27 February 2019. The workshops provided the participants with an overview of the Periodic Reporting process and an understanding of the content and functions of the Periodic Reporting questionnaire. Feedback from participants was very positive with a consensus that the workshop were extremely useful in terms of training of trainers.
20. The meetings assisted greatly in the establishment of closer contacts between national Focal Points in the region, with a view to future regional cooperation and exchange on Periodic Reporting (a WhatsApp group was created for that purpose). Furthermore, the national Focal Points were provided with a better understanding how to facilitate the process for the World Heritage site managers in their countries. For more information, please see: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1907> and <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1943>.
21. The Centre and ARC-WH organized further workshops, this time for World Heritage site managers, in Cairo, Egypt, from 26-27 March 2019, facilitated by the UNESCO office in Cairo, and in Manama, Bahrain, from 29-30 April 2019 at the ARC-WH. The aim was to provide site managers with the necessary tools and guidance to familiarize themselves with the format of Section II of the questionnaire, as the Third Cycle introduces a large number of changes, such as the integration of the Sustainable Development approach, a new emphasis on synergies with other UNESCO cultural conventions and programmes, and factors affecting World Heritage properties.
22. Both site managers meetings included a practical session where they were invited to work live on the questionnaires for their respective properties, which was well received by the participants who suggested that this type of exercise should be organized more often. They agreed it was a beneficial opportunity for site managers to discuss issues such as threats, management and monitoring with peers from other countries. For

more information on the Site Managers' workshops see: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1958> and <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1484/>.

23. The deadline for submission of the completed questionnaires is **31 July 2019**, and the Arab States report will be presented to the World Heritage Committee in 2020.

III. PREPARATION OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN AFRICA

24. The World Heritage Committee had decided at its 41st session that Africa would follow the Arab States region as the next region to begin the exercise of Periodic Reporting in September 2019.
25. In view of the commencement of reporting in Africa, the World Heritage Centre is undertaking numerous measures to facilitate the process, including the update of contact details for the Focal Points and site managers carrying out the exercise; a full review of the records available at the Centre; and communication with the States Parties involved in the exercise, informing them of the key dates and deadlines and updating them on training materials. This includes ensuring that Periodic Reporting is included on the agenda of various World Heritage meetings taking place in the region and ensuring helpdesk support throughout the reporting period.
26. The African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) will be a key partner for the Secretariat in the Periodic Reporting exercise in Africa, similar to the collaboration with ARC-WH in the Arab States region. The AWHF organized a "Preparatory Workshop of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for the African Region" (25 - 27 February 2019), Nelspruit, South Africa, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre, UNESCO regional offices for Southern Africa, ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM, and other World Heritage stakeholders to discuss the lessons learned during the Second Cycle, and the processes and modalities to adopt for the Third Cycle. The AWHF will assist the States Parties and WHC in facilitating the Periodic Reporting exercise in the African Region, by organising workshops and meetings with National Focal Points and World Heritage site managers. A series of activities have been identified to ensure the processes and modalities of implementation, such as the setting up of a coordination team to monitor the exercise in the region.
27. During the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre jointly with the AWHF have scheduled an inception meeting with the African States Parties and the World Heritage site managers from Africa who will be attending the Committee session or the World Heritage Site Managers Forum 2019.

IV. START OF THE PREPARATION OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

28. The World Heritage Centre has proactively started the early preparation for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Asia and the Pacific region, which would begin the exercise in 2020.
29. With support from the UNESCO/Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust, a project entitled "Capacity Building Ahead of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Asia and the Pacific" was approved in late April 2019 and will be launched shortly, in close cooperation with UNESCO Offices in the region and Category 2 Centres. The main aim of this project is to provide National Focal Points and other important regional and sub-regional stakeholders with theoretical and practical training on the Periodic Reporting exercise and ensure that all are aware and ready to prepare adequately for

the start of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for Asia and the Pacific, scheduled for September 2020.

30. For this purpose, a side event on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the region will be organized by the World Heritage Centre during the 43rd session of the Committee.

V. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 43 COM 10B

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/10B,*
2. *Recalling Decision **41 COM 10A** and Decision **42 COM 10A** adopted respectively at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017) and its 42nd session (Manama, 2018);*
3. *Notes with appreciation the successful commencement of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States region and the preparation for the start of the exercise in the Africa region;*
4. *Welcomes the update of the training and guidance tools developed by the Secretariat to facilitate a State-Party driven approach as well as the development of new communication tools to facilitate the exercise of the National Focal Points and World Heritage site managers;*
5. *Requests the Secretariat to continue to ensure that a holistic approach is operated across the regions;*
6. *Further notes with appreciation the committed support provided by the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) in facilitating the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Arab States region, and thanks them in advance for their continued work to complete the process, and to contribute to the subsequent regional report and regional action plan;*
7. *Welcomes the commitment of the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) to assist in facilitating the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Africa region, by organizing regional meetings and providing targeted technical support to States Parties, in close collaboration with the World Heritage Centre;*
8. *Takes note with appreciation of the of the contribution of the Republic of Korea towards the preparation of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the region of Asia and the Pacific;*
9. *Requests the World Heritage Centre to submit to the Committee a progress report on the overall conduct and coordination of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, including the activities carried out in the preparation for the start of the exercise in the Asia and the Pacific region at its 44th session in 2020.*