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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

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Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of World Heritage properties

SUMMARY

This document presents a global and analytical overview of Agenda Item 7 on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties for which a report was prepared for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session.

The document is composed of four parts: a statistical summary (Introduction), a section on statutory matters related to Reactive Monitoring (Part I), a focus on the emergency situation resulting from conflicts (Part II) and a synthesis of other conservation issues which might have strategic consequences (Part III).

The Committee may wish to discuss and take a decision on Item 7 as a whole, as required.

Draft Decision: 40 COM 7, see Part IV.

INTRODUCTION

1. As part of the Reactive Monitoring process¹, the World Heritage Committee will examine at its 40th session the reports on the state of conservation of 156 World Heritage properties (Agenda items 7A and 7B), including the 48 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Agenda item 7A). In addition, due to specific situations, two decisions, one on the World Heritage properties of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and one on those of the Syrian Arab Republic, will also be examined under Agenda item 7A.
2. The properties reported upon are selected, among all those inscribed on the World Heritage List, according to the following considerations:
 - 48 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Agenda item 7A);
 - 82 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List for which state of conservation reports were requested by the World Heritage Committee at its previous sessions (Agenda item 7B);
 - 17 properties for which, upon inscription on the World Heritage List, a follow-up was requested by the World Heritage Committee (Agenda item 7B);
 - 9 properties, which have come under threat since the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee and which require urgent actions in addition to the consultations and discussions that normally take place between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in order to address the threat (Agenda item 7B).
3. The 156 properties for examination are distributed as follows:

Agenda item 7A Document WHC/16/40.COM/7A Document WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add Document WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add.2	NAT	CLT	total
AFR	13	3	16
ARB	0	16	16
APA	2	2	4
EUR/NA	1	4	5
LAC	2	5	7
Total	18	30	48

Agenda item 7B Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add.2	NAT	MIX	CLT	total
AFR	7	1	12	20
ARB	2	1	8	11
APA	5	2	19	26
EUR/NA	13	1	18	32
LAC	9	1	9	19
Total	36	6	66	108

¹For further details on this process, visit the dedicated page on the World Heritage Centre's online State of conservation Information System at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>

4. These 156 properties represent 15% of all the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. Significant variations among the regions are noticeable (see below Chart 1). For example, the Africa and the Arab States regions each represent 33% of all properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (item 7A), although they represent today only 9% and 8% of the World Heritage List respectively.

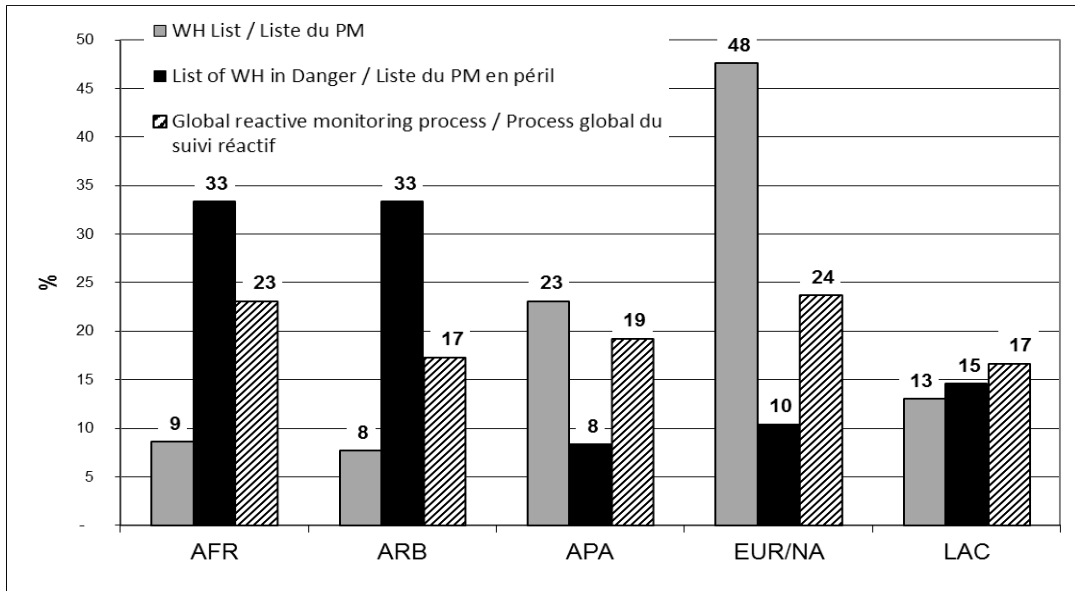


Chart 1: Percentage of properties located in each region

5. There are also significant variations when considering the categories of heritage (natural, mixed and cultural properties). Indeed, while natural properties represent 19% of the World Heritage List, they account for nearly 40% of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and one third of all properties subject to the Reactive Monitoring process (see Chart 2 below).

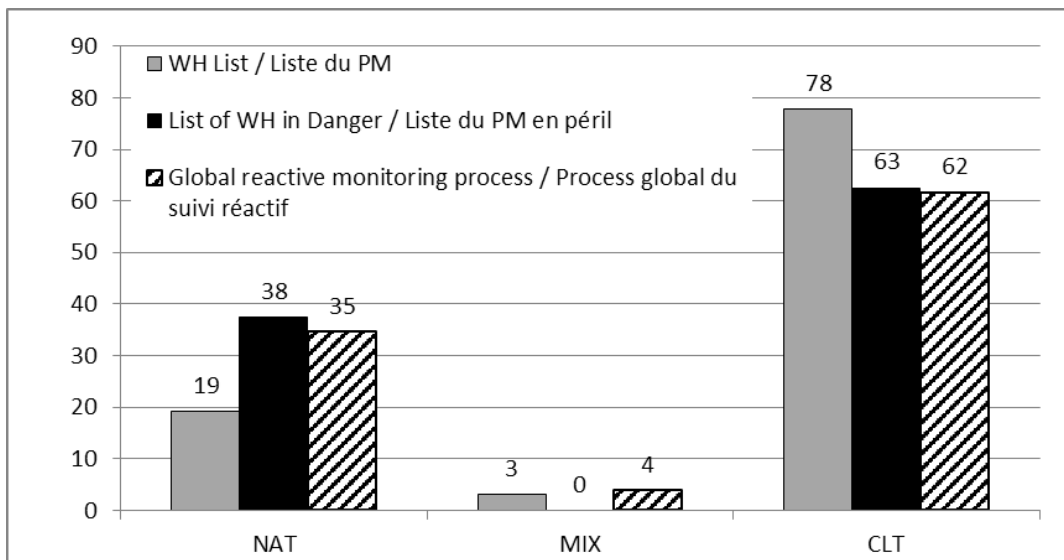


Chart 2: Percentage of properties of each category (natural, mixed, cultural)

6. The 156 properties for which a state of conservation report is presented are facing a number of factors, which negatively impact, or may impact, their Outstanding Universal Value. A total of 61 different factors affecting these properties have been identified, with an average of 4.2 factors affecting each property, which emphasizes once more the cumulative impact of threats on the OUV.

7. Globally, the most reported factors affecting the properties in 2016 are the following:

Factors	Percentage of the reported properties affected
Management systems/ management plan	72,4%
Housing	29,5%
Illegal activities	25,0%
Ground transport infrastructure	19,2%
Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation	18,6%
Legal framework	16,7%
Land conversion	16,7%
Management activities	16,0%
Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure	13,5%
Mining	13,5%
War	10,9%
Water infrastructure	10,9%
Livestock farming / grazing of domesticated animals	9,6%
Civil unrest	8,3%
Human resources	8,3%
Financial resources	8,3%

8. Factors affecting the World Heritage properties vary according to the category of heritage considered. The table below presents the most reported factors affecting respectively natural and cultural properties, as identified in the SOC reports presented in 2016:

Natural properties		Cultural properties	
Factors	Percentage of the reported properties affected	Factors	Percentage of the reported properties affected
Management systems/ management plan	59,3%	Management systems/ management plan	78,1%
Illegal activities	51,9%	Housing	43,7%
Mining	31,5%	Management activities	24%
Water infrastructure	25,9%	Legal framework	19,8%
Land conversion	25,9%	War and Civil unrest	17,7%
Livestock farming / grazing of domesticated animals	25,9%	Ground transport infrastructure	15,6%
Ground transport infrastructure	25,9%	Land conversion	12,5%
Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation	24,1%	Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation	12,5%
Oil and gas	18,5%	Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure	12,5%
Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure	16,7%	Deliberate destruction of heritage	11,5%
Legal framework	14,8%	Illegal activities	10,4%
Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community	14,8%	Interpretative and visitation facilities	10,4%
War and Civil unrest	14,8%	Erosion and siltation/ deposition	9,4%
Invasive/alien terrestrial species	13,0%	Human resources	8,3%
Governance	11,1%	Effects arising from use of transportation infrastructure	7,3%
Invasive / alien freshwater species	11,1%		

9. More detailed statistics can be found at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc> (search for “2016”, then “Views” and “Statistics”).
10. The following parts of the document present insights on specific factors, such as conflict situation, reconstruction, climate change, ground transport infrastructures, etc. It also includes clarifications on the organization of Reactive Monitoring missions and on the importance and drafting of Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR).
11. The World Heritage Centre wishes to underline the limited percentage of receipt of the state of conservation reports requested by the World Heritage Committee to States Parties, which were submitted within the statutory deadlines of 1 December 2015 and 1 February 2016. By 15 December 2015, only 60% of the reports requested by 1 December had been received by the World Heritage Centre; and by 15 February 2016, only 56% of the reports requested by 1 February had been received.
12. 80% of all the requested reports were received by the end of February 2016 and 89% by the end of March 2016. At the time of drafting this document, 11 reports had not yet been submitted.
13. The World Heritage Centre wishes to recall that delayed submission of these reports and/or late submission of additional information by the States Parties inevitably lead to a reduced time available for dialogue between the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies on the issues at stake. Furthermore, late submissions also lead to an increasing number of SOC reports being included in the Addendum documents (7A.Add, 7A.Add.2, 7B.Add and 7B.Add.2), hence reducing the time available for Committee members to review these reports before the Committee session. 90 reports were made available on the first statutory deadline for dispatch of documents, on 27 May 2016, (Documents WHC/16/40.COM/7A and 7B) and 66 remaining reports were made available on the second and third dispatches, on 10 June 2016 (Documents WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add and WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add) and 27 June 2016 (Documents WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add.2 and WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add.2).
14. Lastly, the World Heritage Centre would like to acknowledge that out of the 140 reports received, 111 (80%) have been made fully accessible to the public at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>, as well as 23 summaries (16%). The availability of such an important number of complete state of conservation reports online greatly contributes to the transparency of the Reactive Monitoring process, in line with the outcomes of the “Thinking ahead” reflection and States Parties should be commended for allowing such online publication.

I. STATUTORY MATTERS RELATED TO REACTIVE MONITORING

A. Organization of Reactive Monitoring missions

15. Over the last couple of years, the World Heritage Centre has been approached by some States Parties requesting clarifications and information concerning the nature and organization of Reactive Monitoring missions. Indeed, while Reactive Monitoring missions have for a long time been one of the tools for monitoring the state of conservation (SOC) of World Heritage properties, the *Operational Guidelines* did not include a specific reference in this regard and the term “Reactive Monitoring mission” was used only in Committee decisions.
16. In the framework of the 2015 revision of the *Operational Guidelines*, the Reactive Monitoring missions were formally included in the *Operational Guidelines* (Paragraph 28.f and definition in footnote) as part of the statutory reporting by the Secretariat and

the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of specific properties that are under threat (see Paragraph 169).

17. When the information available in a state of conservation report is still not sufficient for the World Heritage Committee to adopt a well-informed decision, the Committee may decide that the Secretariat be authorized to take the necessary action to ascertain, in consultation with the State Party concerned, the present condition of the property, the dangers to its Outstanding Universal Value (VUE) and the feasibility of adequately restoring it through the sending of a Reactive Monitoring mission. Such missions can only be requested by the World Heritage Committee and are conducted by the World Heritage Centre alone or jointly with the respective Advisory Body/ies, depending on the type of property (cultural, natural, mixed). In most cases, the Committee specifies in its decisions which entities should undertake the mission.
18. After the mission has taken place and the report has been made available to the State Party, the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies report back to the Committee on the findings of the mission at a following session, in conjunction with the examination of the SOC report on the respective property.
19. With regard to the process of organizing a Reactive Monitoring mission further to a Committee decision requesting the State Party to invite such mission, the State Party concerned is expected to send to the World Heritage Centre, as soon as possible and appropriate, a letter inviting the mission and proposing a provisional timeframe or a number of provisional dates for carrying out the mission.
20. Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Reactive Monitoring mission are subsequently established by the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the relevant Advisory Body(ies), and in line with the decision adopted by the World Heritage Committee. The ToR are finalized in consultation with the State Party.
21. A realistic and appropriate mission programme that should adequately reflect the agreed ToR of the mission should then be proposed by the State Party and agreed upon with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body(ies). In drafting the programme, in addition to the site visit, due care should be given by the State Party to ensure that all stakeholders involved in or affected by the conservation and protection of the property are being taken into account for meetings with the mission team. This includes representatives of the respective authorities, but also local communities, members of civil society, representatives of the private sector with an interest in the mission ToR (e.g. extractive industry in case of a mining project).
22. It should be noted that the costs of the Reactive Monitoring missions are borne by the World Heritage Fund.
23. The mission experts are selected by the respective organizations, World Heritage Centre and/or Advisory Bodies, from their staff members or from their networks of experts and consultants who have experience relevant to the ToR for the mission.
24. Following the Reactive Monitoring mission, a report with a set of recommendations is prepared by the mission experts and peer-reviewed by the institutions concerned (World Heritage Centre and/or Advisory Bodies) prior to submission to the State Party. Although there is no written rule, it is strongly recommended that Reactive Monitoring mission reports should be finalized within 2 months following the end of the mission.
25. Once the report is finalized, it is shared with the State Party. Should the State Party notice any factual errors in the report - and only factual errors - it can notify the World Heritage Centre in the best delays.
26. Subsequently, in line with the ongoing efforts for an improved transparency of all processes of the *World Heritage Convention*, the mission report is uploaded on the World Heritage Centre' State of conservation Information System

(<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>), for public access, two weeks after its submission to the State Party concerned.

B. Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

27. At its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), the World Heritage Committee amended Paragraph 183 of the *Operational Guidelines* to formally adopt, when considering the inscription of a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, a Desired state of conservation for the removal of this property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) (Decision **35 COM 7C**).
28. As a follow-up to this decision, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies prepared a Guidance Note to provide advice on preparing, monitoring and reporting on the DSO CR. This Guidance Note, aiming primary at audiences involved in this process such as States Parties and site managers, is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/document/123577> and was welcomed by the World Heritage Committee at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013) (Decision **37 COM 7A.40**).
29. The DSO CR is a defined state of conservation that a property inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger must reach in order to demonstrate that it is no longer threatened by serious and specific danger, and to enable its removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger. The DSO CR is intended to enable the World Heritage Committee to take informed decisions on the basis of the status of threats, of the recovery of any damaged attributes, and of the capacity of the property's protection and management system to control threats.
30. When the Committee is satisfied that a property has achieved its DSO CR, it may decide to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. However, continued monitoring of the state of conservation of the property through regular state of conservation reporting will usually be necessary in order to demonstrate the continued capacity of the property's protection and management system to control threats and to ensure the OUV is sustained in the long-term.
31. In addition, the DSO CR, and particularly any related indicators, should be part of a property's overall management. For example, indicators should ideally be incorporated into a property's existing monitoring framework, in order to track progress in achieving the DSO CR. The DSO CR framework can also play an important part in coordinating the engagement of various actors in the conservation and management of a property, including States Parties, community groups and non-governmental organizations.
32. The submission of the DSO CR by a State Party and its subsequent adoption by the World Heritage Committee should usually come prior to the finalization and approval of, for example, the necessary changes to planning tools and regulatory framework; those being usually part of the corrective measures whose implementation will be guided by the DSO CR.
33. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are actively supporting States Parties to develop and submit DSO CR for the majority of endangered properties, but in some cases, and particularly in relation to natural properties, the development of DSO CRs and their related indicators is delayed by the need to establish baseline data on a property's values, for example through surveys.
34. In addition to the DSO CR, the State Party has to define a set of corrective measures which will need to be implemented according to a specific timeframe, in order to immediately address the factors negatively impacting on the OUV of the property. These corrective measures are established in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, and adopted by the Committee. For example, in some cases where the property is affected by poaching on key species contributing to

the OUV of the property, specific biological data may be required through an inventory to define the indicators for the DSOCR; yet anti-poaching measures can already be implemented as part of the corrective measures. Similarly, for cultural sites, in cases where a property is affected by the destruction and/or new construction of buildings, a specific urban inventory and analysis of urban forms may be required to define the indicators, while a moratorium on building constructions can be implemented as part of the corrective measures and a timeframe for the inventory can be defined.

II. EMERGENCY SITUATION RESULTING FROM CONFLICTS

35. Conflicts continue to represent a major threat to World Heritage properties. In 2016, 18% of the properties reported at the 40th session of the Committee are located in conflict areas (either wars or civil unrest) and are at risk. Actions are being pursued to monitor and/or safeguard this heritage and advocate for its protection at international and national level; other actions have been developed to mitigate and prevent risks, and to address the challenges of recovery processes.
36. In Timbuktu (Mali), the restoration of 14 of the 16 mausoleums of Timbuktu destroyed since May 2012, was completed in July 2015 thanks to reconstruction work undertaken with the full involvement of the local communities. Moreover, during the conflict, about 4200 ancient manuscripts were damaged, burned or displaced by armed groups while some 350,000 manuscripts were transferred to Bamako for safekeeping. Following the international expert meeting for the safeguarding of Mali's cultural heritage organized by UNESCO in February 2013, an action plan was developed to implement measures for the protection of heritage and capacity building, which facilitated the mobilization of considerable funding sources, in particular the European Union, Switzerland and Norway. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2100 (adopted 25 April 2014) requested the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to ensure the safeguarding of cultural heritage sites in Mali in collaboration with UNESCO, which marked the very first time that the official mandate of a UN Peace keeping mission referred to the protection of cultural heritage. In that context, UNESCO organized training in cultural heritage protection for approximately 2,000 MINUSMA staff, focusing not only heritage sites and monuments, but also the protection of cultural objects and the fight against illicit trafficking. Among the other measures undertaken by UNESCO to ensure the protection of the Malian cultural heritage, was the creation of the "Heritage Passport" for the north of Mali, in order to facilitate Mali's implementation of its Law on Heritage and the World Heritage Convention and sensitize the armed forces and other partners intervening on the ground on the importance of the protection of a number of identified sites.
37. In Nigeria, conflicts have inflicted damages to palace buildings and houses in the Sukur Cultural Landscapes. Reconstruction work has been undertaken to some of the traditional buildings by the local community but community buildings such as schools remain to be restored.
38. Conservation works continue at the two Buddha niches in the Bamiyan Valley, Afghanistan, as the rears of the Buddha niches became considerably fragile and unstable following the 2001 blast; an international symposium is being planned in order to thoroughly discuss the issue of possible reconstruction work at the property by involving all the relevant stakeholders. The meeting, to be funded by the UNESCO Japan FIT project, will discuss, in line with the decisions on this issue made by the World Heritage Committee, the feasibility of reconstruction in particular in the Eastern Buddha niche, which was much less damaged than the Western one.
39. The Arab Region continues to be affected by distressing conflicts. In Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, due to armed conflicts and political instability, the humanitarian conditions

are increasingly and overwhelmingly degraded and the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties, the sites inscribed on the Tentative Lists, and cultural heritage as a whole, is highly preoccupying.

40. The armed conflict in Syria started in March 2011 and has constantly escalated, leading to the destruction of major testimonies of Syria's exceptional archaeological, urban and architectural heritage. The conflict has seriously affected directly all six World Heritage properties, the 12 sites inscribed on the Tentative List, and a wide number of highly significant cultural heritage sites all over Syria. Cultural heritage in Syria continues to be damaged by shelling, street fighting, targeted explosions, extensive illegal excavations, construction violations, and quarrying, use for military purposes, such as training areas, and inappropriate use of archaeological sites by internally displaced populations. Moreover, intentional destructions inflicted by armed groups have severely and irreversibly destroyed major attributes of Palmyra, which have been assessed during a UNESCO Rapid Assessment mission end of April 2016 (see webpages <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3350> and <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23>); damages are reported in the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria and in Bosra. Illegal excavations have continued to irreversibly damage tens of archaeological sites and Tells (for further details, see Document WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add). First-Aid measures at Palmyra, and other World Heritage properties in Syria will require important support in terms of technical assistance and funding. The UNESCO Beirut Office continues to implement the project funded by the European Union, and co-financed by the Government of Flanders and Austria to support the safeguarding of Syria's cultural heritage. A large expert meeting (220 participants) was held in Berlin from 2 to 4 June 2016 to take stock of the progress made since the 2014 UNESCO expert meeting, identify gaps, and improve the Syria Action Plan where needed. The meeting also addressed post-conflict recovery plans in Syria.
41. In Iraq, the situation has dramatically deteriorated since 2014, with the rise of armed extremist groups. In addition to the tragic loss of human life and the humanitarian crisis associated with the persecution of cultural and religious minorities, cultural heritage has been the target of intentional destruction at a staggering scale. Since the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee (Bonn, 2015), the World Heritage properties of Ashur, Samarra Archaeological City and Hatra, and all other cultural heritage sites located in highly volatile conflict areas, continue to be exposed to high risks of destruction. Looting and illicit trafficking have become a growing concern. Several of the 11 Iraqi sites inscribed on the Tentative List are also threatened by the current conflict. In most cases, it is very difficult to monitor the situation on the ground and to assess damages. Damages have been confirmed by UNOSAT (UNITAR) satellite imagery monitoring. The State Party has also reported several intentional destructions inflicted to the site of Nimrud, and to fortification walls and gates of the Site of Nineveh's, both inscribed on Iraq's Tentative List. The implementation of the Action Plan for the Emergency Safeguarding of Iraq's Cultural Heritage, adopted in July 2014, is going at a very low pace due to lack of funding.
42. In Libya, rising insecurity places the World Heritage properties of the Archaeological Sites of Sabratha, Cyrene and Leptis Magna at a high level of risk. Moreover, due the lack of proper governance and to the difficult political situation in Libya, illegal constructions within World Heritage properties and urban encroachment have become major concerns. Tadrart Acacus is exposed to unprecedented rates of human presence due to migratory movements and is increasingly exposed to vandalism.
43. The World Heritage Centre and the UNESCO Cairo Office organized a workshop on the reinforcement of the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, in Tunis from 4 to 7 October 2015, for 16 staff from different territorial offices of the Libyan Directorate of Antiquities (DoA) where it was possible to review the state of

conservation of the World Heritage properties and draw the first draft of the country's Tentative List as an emergency inventory and protection tool. On 10 and 11 October 2015, staff from the Libyan DoA received training and technical assistance on the installation of security systems at the World Heritage property of Cyrene. As a result, the fencing off of the most threatened areas at the World Heritage property is underway, as well as the installation of a pilot anti-intrusion system. Anti-intrusion and security sets for museums are being procured. Moreover, from 29 October to 5 November 2015, UNESCO organized the 2nd cycle of the "Risk-Preparedness for Cultural Collections and Built Heritage" training course in Tunis, in cooperation with ICCROM ATHAR and the National Heritage Institute of Tunisia. This was a follow-up to the introductory training conducted in June 2015 in Djerba and engaged 27 Libyan participants and two representatives of the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities of Yemen (GOPHCY).

44. Libyan professionals and civil servants in charge of cultural heritage, provided some basic information on the state of conservation of World Heritage sites in Libya, during a meeting dedicated to Libya from 9 to 11 May 2016 (Tunis, Tunisia). The meeting entitled Emergency Safeguarding of Libya's Cultural Heritage, was organised by UNESCO and ICCROM; it gathered 80 national and international professionals. It addressed built (archaeological sites and historic cities), movable and intangible heritage, and allowed assessing the damages, and defining concrete short, medium and long-term actions. Fortunately, no major intentional destructions have been reported since the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee (Bonn, 2015) to cultural heritage sites but threats to Libya's cultural heritage sites are imminent and require urgent risk prevention measures (security and equipment, fencing of the sites, monitoring tools and trained staff), and important funding.
45. In Yemen, the State Party reports that the country continues to suffer significant political and socio-economic disturbances that ultimately affect heritage preservation. The conflict in Yemen has caused important and irreversible damage to the Old City of Sana'a, destroying at least 8 historic buildings and damaging around 100. Moreover, the Historic City of Saada, and the Archaeological Site of Marib, on the Tentative list have been severely damaged, and so have been the archaeological city of Baraqish, the al-Qahirah Citadel in Taiz, the Dhamar Museum, the al-Salam Bridge in Shabwa, the Historic City of Kawakban and two historic monuments in the Amran governorate. The Ibn Ismail Shrine in Hadramaut was intentionally destroyed.
46. However, the State Party reports that, despite the very difficult conditions in the country and the scarcity of available resources, the employees of the Ministry of Culture have endeavoured to exercise their responsibilities for the protection of cultural heritage, particularly in places located within the boundaries of properties. In particular, the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen (GOPHCY) has endeavoured to survey and draw a project for the reconstruction of al-Qasimi Neighbourhood, with technical assistance from UNESCO Doha, ICCROM, ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, but the project was halted due to lack of funding. Governance has become a major problem with the Government members being in exile, and changes in the staffing of GOPHCY being made. Further progress has been made to foster greater engagement of the local communities in Zabid. The natural World Heritage property of Socotra has suffered damages following two cyclones; worryingly, the lack of proper governance due to the conflict has led to several activities that are causing important ascertained and potential damages to the property, including an important development project, coral collection, stone extraction, and trees' uprooting. In July 2015, UNESCO organized an Expert Meeting which elaborated an Emergency Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Yemen's Cultural heritage, with short, medium and long term actions some of which can be conducted by the State Party with

remote technical support by UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies, but in the absence of financial support, these actions could not be implemented.

47. The World Heritage Centre organized an expert meeting entitled “Post-conflict-reconstruction in the Middle-East context, and in the Old City of Aleppo in Particular” (18-19 June 2015), which addressed the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction in the Arab region taking into consideration the issue of extensive urban destruction and damage. The meeting participants made recommendations, which resulted in the development of an Action Plan for the Middle-East and Aleppo (for further details, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1286/> and the following section III.A. on Reconstruction of the present Document)
48. In the face of the growing needs, the World Heritage Centre needs to step-up its operational response and reactivity, and ensure proper implementation and follow-up of all emergency measures identified for Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. However, this is currently achieved only partially due to lack of adequate human resources. Similarly the calls on the resources of the Advisory Bodies in connection with the on-going conflicts have increased to a significant degree and beyond what can be handled reasonably within the limits of current resources.
49. UNESCO has pursued its follow-up to the implementation of the United Nations Security Council of Resolution 2199 (February 2015) that included legally binding measures to counter illicit trafficking of antiquities and cultural objects from Iraq and Syria, in close cooperation with INTERPOL and other institutional partners. UNESCO submitted a report to the United Nations Sanctions Monitoring Team based on information received from Member States on counter measures taken at the national level. This report served as a basis for the recommendations of the Chair of the Security Council Committee to the Security Council. One of the main outcomes of UNESCO’s follow-up is the adoption of Resolution 2253 (December 2015) which widens the obligation to report on oil related crimes stipulated in Resolution 2199, to cultural objects. This new Resolution builds on Resolution 2253 as it is not limited to a specific country, but aims to suppress the financing of terrorism more broadly. This enables States to replicate the same counter measures for other countries in conflict, such as in Mali, Yemen and Libya.
50. At its 38th session, the General Conference adopted Resolution 38 C/48, concerning the reinforcement of UNESCO’s action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict. The Resolution invited the Director-General to elaborate, in coordination with Member States and relevant actors, an action plan in order to further refine and implement the strategy, in accordance with UNESCO mandate; invited Member States to support the elaboration of the action plan for the implementation of the strategy, by defining mechanisms of rapid response and mobilization of national experts, as well as by contributing to the Heritage Emergency Fund; and invited the Director-General to explore, in collaboration with Member States, practical ways for implementing such mechanism for the rapid intervention and mobilization of national experts. Consultations with all relevant United Nations bodies and with the UNESCO Member States are being undertaken in order to explore the best modalities for the implementation of the strategy.
51. Since the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee (Bonn, 2015), the Director-General of UNESCO has repeatedly called on all parties to halt the destruction of heritage in Syria, Iraq Libya and Yemen, and has denounced the attacks to cultural diversity in Iraq and Syria. She also undertook numerous actions to advocate at the international level to the international community to mobilize for the protection of the endangered cultural sites in the region, and join the international awareness raising campaign launched by UNESCO in 2014: #UNITE4HERITAGE. UNESCO also organized a High-Level Meeting and Technical Conference “#UNITE4HERITAGE:

Cultural Diversity under attack: Protecting Heritage for Peace”, which was held in Brussels, Belgium, on 9 June 2016. This meeting, which benefited from the support of the Flemish Government, sought at strengthening policy advocacy for better recognition of cultural diversity in strategies for reconstruction and peacebuilding.

52. Natural sites also continue to suffer from the result of conflicts in Central Africa, including in the Central African Republic (CAR) where insecurity continues to complicate the implementation of corrective measures at Manovo-Gounda St Floris National Park, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) where insecurity remains a persistent problem affecting all the four sites located in the eastern region. Over the last twelve months, the staff from Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN - Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature) sustained heavy casualties and many were wounded: since April 2015, nine ICCN guards and three FARDC soldiers were killed in the line of duty in Garamba National Park. In March 2016, a guard was killed in Kahuzi-Biega National Park, two guards killed in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve and two more in the Virunga National Park. The government of DRC has established, in June 2015, a Corps to strengthen security in the national parks. Furthermore, military contingents from the Armed Forces (FARDC) are deployed in all the sites to undertake joint patrols, with ICCN, to strengthen security.
53. Poaching, in some cases fuelled by ongoing conflict, remains the greatest threat to the integrity of the World Heritage properties in the Central Africa region. Lack of law enforcement, lack of governance structures, and armed conflicts in CAR and DRC are fuelling elephant poaching in Manovo-Gounda St Floris National Park and Garamba National Park, and the illicit trafficking of ivory. In Garamba National Park, the Northern White Rhino is now considered extinct in the wild, largely as a result of poaching. Rebel groups are trafficking wildlife and wildlife products to finance their illegal activities, impacting populations of iconic species such as elephant, the population of which has decreased considerably during the last decade.

III. OTHER CONSERVATION ISSUES

A. Reconstruction

54. The recent and wide-ranging deliberate destruction of World Heritage properties as a result of armed conflict in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Mali and Nigeria, and the devastating earthquakes in Nepal, has brought sharply into focus the issue of reconstruction in World Heritage properties and particularly what this means for extensive and coherent areas that support thriving communities.
55. It should be recalled that reconstruction of World Heritage properties has been discussed on many occasions by the World Heritage Committee, both before inscription, notably for the Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae, Egypt, inscribed 1979, the Historic Centre of Warsaw, Poland, inscribed 1980, and the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, inscribed 2005, and after inscription such as for Dubrovnik and other properties impacted by conflict in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s (for example, inscription of the City of Dubrovnik on the List of World Heritage in Danger at the 15th session of the Committee (Carthage, 1991)), and more recently the Muzibu Azaala Mpanga Tomb, part of the Kasubi Tombs, Uganda, destroyed by fire on 16 March 2010.
56. In the past year, a number of expert meetings were organized by the World Heritage Centre or with its participation. Among them were the meeting organized by UNESCO on 18-19 June 2015 on "Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Middle East Context, and in the Old City of Aleppo in particular", the ICOMOS preliminary colloquium on "Post-Trauma Reconstruction", Paris, France, March 2016; the ICOMOS meeting on Post-

Trauma Reconstruction on 4 March 2016; as well as a Roundtable organized on 10-11 March 2016 by the Canada Research Chair on Built Heritage - Université de Montréal (Canada) on “From Conservation to reconstruction: How World Heritage is changing theory and practice” at the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. The ICOMOS Colloquium highlighted the potential of a working network, active worldwide, involving international organisations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, but also universities and applied research institutes, to explore priorities for research and documentation (see page <http://www.icomos.org/en/what-we-do/focus/6149-post-trauma-reconstruction-proceedings-available-for-download>). ICCROM has also carried out a number of capacity building activities in partnership with UNESCO and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage over the past year for professionals from Syria, Libya and Yemen on the topic of first-aid and protection of cultural heritage in times of crisis. These activities included discussions related to reconstruction of heritage damaged as part of the ongoing conflict situations. In addition to those, further meetings are planned such as the “Follow-up to the implementation of the UNESCO Action Plan for the Emergency Safeguarding of Syria’s Cultural Heritage” (Berlin, 2-4 June 2016) and the ICOMOS Workshop on Reconstruction in World Heritage properties, to take place in September 2016.

57. The June 2015 meeting addressed in particular post-conflict reconstruction examined through case studies in Europe after World War II, Bosnia Herzegovina and Lebanon and reviewed existing theoretical frameworks and international charters in the area of conservation and their relevance in relation with reconstruction. Recent case studies of different approaches in Timbuktu and in Afghanistan were discussed in-depth. At the Montreal Roundtable, experts analyzed that the existing doctrine requires careful evaluation in view of globally changing attitudes to reconstruction; that regional approaches emerge in relation to reconstruction; and that new challenges surface due to new technologies promoted by universities and technology institutions/organizations.
58. These and other national meetings and broader reflections are beginning to highlight the need to see reconstruction not as a single concept but as a multi-faceted process that goes far beyond the idea of reconstructing fabric, and one that poses complex ideological and socio-economic questions, brings potential conflicting expectations, and may lead to many different outcomes.
59. An important outcome of these meetings was the need to start engaging in key partnerships and raising awareness on best practices in order to avoid tensions through reconstruction by developing an integrated approach that prioritizes the collective healing process, reconciliation and involvement of local communities, and that enlarges the dimension of intangible heritage and its role, as well as mitigating the risks of reinventing heritage/re-writing history.
60. Indeed, for World Heritage properties, reconstruction must relate to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and for many properties this goes beyond the fabric of buildings, monuments, cities etc., to encompass processes linking people to places or to historical, social or spiritual associations, depending on the nature of the attributes and their role in conveying OUV.
61. The guidance on reconstruction in the Operational Guidelines is limited and Paragraph 86 presents a dilemma between the obligation to sustain the OUV and its attributes, and the obligation to adhere to the idea that reconstruction (apart from anastylosis) should be ruled out, other than in “exceptional circumstances” and “on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture”, both concepts, which lack definition.
62. Taking account of all of the above, it is suggested that more reflection is needed on the issue of reconstruction in World Heritage properties, and that there is a degree of urgency for this in the light of the traumas faced by communities who have lost their

homes and frames of reference. Such a reflection could acknowledge the wealth of experience and knowledge that exists within the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre on technical and other facets of reconstruction.

63. It is therefore recommended that the Committee consider supporting the drafting of new guidance to reflect the multi-faceted challenges that reconstruction brings, its social and economic context, the short- and long-term needs of properties, and the idea of reconstruction as a process that should be undertaken within the framework of the OUV of the properties.

B. Climate Change

64. At the forefront of identifying and managing the impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage, the World Heritage Committee adopted a Policy Document on the Impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage Properties in 2007. At its 39th session (Bonn, 2015), it acknowledged that *“World Heritage properties are being increasingly affected by Climate Change”*, and also strongly encouraged all States Parties to participate in the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Le Bourget, France, from 30 November to 12 December 2015, *“with a view to achieving a universal climate agreement and mobilize global climate action on the ground”* (Decision **39 COM 7**).
65. As anticipated, the major achievement of COP21 was reached on 12 December 2015, when the “Paris Agreement” was successfully adopted, under which all parties have agreed the following:
- A long-term goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with the aim to limit the increase to 1.5°C;
 - Recognition that it will take longer for global emissions to peak for developing countries and of the need to undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with the best available science;
 - The contribution that each country should make to achieve the global goal is determined by all countries individually and are called “nationally determined contributions”;
 - Every 5 years, progress towards the long-term goal through a robust transparency and accountability system to be tracked;
 - Strengthening of societies' ability to adapt to the impacts of climate Change to provide continued and enhanced international support for adaptation to developing countries;
 - Cooperation and enhancement of the understanding, action and support in different areas such as early warning systems, emergency preparedness and risk insurance.
 - Developed countries continue their existing collective goal to mobilise USD 100 billion per year until 2025, when a new collective goal will be set.
66. The Paris Agreement covers a number of UNESCO priority areas and competencies, even if it may not call for any major particular re-orientation of UNESCO’s actions. In a general manner, the role of the World Heritage Convention in achieving the Paris Agreement through the protection of heritage is clear in several articles. Particularly relevant is the implicit recognition of its importance in ensuring that *“adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems,*

with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate” (Article 7.5 of the Paris Agreement). This approach is also supported by Article 5.1 of the World Heritage Convention itself, which calls on each State Party to “adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes”.

67. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies will continue to provide support to all States Parties, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of Climate Change, in strengthening their capacities to safeguard their heritage, both natural and cultural, and in implementing preventive and corrective measures to combat Climate Change impacts on their heritage, including through raising awareness, sharing of information, good practices, experiences and lessons learned, and developing pilot projects towards Climate Change mitigation, adaptation and resilience building.
68. In addition, in November 2015, a few days prior to the opening of COP21, the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention adopted a new policy on sustainable development, which includes a section on strengthening resilience to natural hazards and Climate Change (Resolution **20 GA 13**). The policy states that in the face of increasing disaster risks and the impact of Climate Change, States Parties should recognize that World Heritage represents both an asset to be protected and a resource to strengthen the ability of communities and their properties to resist, absorb, and recover from the effects of a hazard.

C. Dams

69. It is noted with concern that an increasing number of properties continue to face potential threats from major dam projects, including Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal), Selous Game Reserve (Tanzania), Lake Turkana National Parks (Kenya), and Lake Baikal (Russian Federation). While in many cases the proposed dams are located outside the property boundaries, with the notable exception of Selous Game Reserve (Tanzania), significant impacts could occur on the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties located upstream or downstream from the proposed dams. These impacts can be both direct as a result of water scarcity or flooding, and indirect as a result of impacts on migratory fish and crustaceans as well as pollution of downstream waters. During the Committee’s 40th session, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN are recommending the inscription of two properties (Talamanca Range-La Amistad Reserves/La Amistad National Park (Costa Rica/Panama) and Dja Faunal Reserve (Cameroon)) on the List of World Heritage in Danger, either fully or in part as a result of both ascertained and potential danger, respectively, caused by dam developments.
70. Recalling the recommendation made by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN during the 35th session of the Committee that it establish a clear policy on dams, as was done with mining and oil development, highlighting the clear criteria to be used for financing, impact assessments and follow-up of megaprojects, it should be noted that IUCN’s Water Programme has over the past four years continually engaged with a variety of partners, including the International Hydropower Association (IHA), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to develop strategies to improve the sustainability of hydropower, in particular to reduce downstream negative impacts. This ongoing process of developing such strategies will need to take into account concerns raised about the negative impact of dams on World Heritage properties. In the meantime, it is recommended that the Committee urge States Parties to ensure that the impacts from dams that could affect properties located upstream or downstream within the same river basin are rigorously assessed in order to avoid impacts on OUV.

D. Extractive industries

71. A 2016 report by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), drawing on the 2014 IUCN World Heritage Outlook, found that extractive activities posed a significant threat to over half of all natural and mixed properties, which has been further confirmed by an analysis by the World Heritage Centre on the issues reported to the Committee through the state of conservation reports revealing an increasing trend of properties reporting mining, oil or gas exploration or exploitation (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/extractive-industries>). While the analysis by the World Heritage Centre identifies the overwhelming impacts on natural and mixed properties, the extractive industry also poses a potential threat to cultural properties. In recognition of the threats from extractive industries, Tullow Oil plc in November 2015 announced its commitment to not explore for or exploit hydrocarbon resources within designated World Heritage areas. Similarly, CEMEX in April 2016 announced its commitment to consider World Heritage sites “No-go” areas. Both companies made these commitments following negotiations with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, adding to the previously made “No-go” commitments by several industry leaders.
72. Dialogue with industries also continued during the 4th Global Forum on Responsible Business Conduct at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on 8 June 2016, with a specific session on “Protecting World Heritage Sites and the role of the OECD Guidelines”. The session highlighted the importance of World Heritage sites and the role that they play in delivering sustainable development outcomes benefitting people and nature. It examined threats sites face and highlighted steps that some companies and banks have already taken to ensure their preservation. It also explored what governments, business, the finance sector and civil society could further do and the role that the OECD guidelines should play in supporting these precious sites. Participants included the Chair of the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct, the Finnish Ambassador to UNESCO and OECD, the Director of the World Heritage Centre, representatives of Tullow Oil, JP Morgan and WWF International organizing the event, which was well attended.

E. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) / Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs)

73. The analysis of the World Heritage Centre shows that of a significant number of state of conservation reports note the need to undertake additional environmental and heritage assessments of impacts from proposed developments, proposed legal instruments, or proposed management systems on the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties and to submit them to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.
74. It is also noted that in many cases where projects that might have an adverse impact on OUV, and which are notified under Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, these are submitted without an appropriate impact assessment. In these cases, the World Heritage Committee will usually need to request one to be submitted, thus extending the timescale under which these projects are considered.
75. Such assessments should respectively be undertaken in accordance with the IUCN’s *World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment* and the ICOMOS’ *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*. It is important to note that Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) should be undertaken not only for projects that are likely to have a direct impact on the OUV of World Heritage properties, but also for projects that could have indirect and/or cumulative impacts on the OUV. This includes projects that are located outside the boundaries of World Heritage properties, sometimes at great distances or in neighbouring countries (for example development projects in Ethiopia

that could impact on Lake Turkana National Parks (Kenya), development projects in Angola and Namibia that could impact on Okavango Delta, (Botswana), and development projects in Mongolia that could impact on Lake Baikal (Russian Federation) and at a smaller scale also such as rail or road networks for Cultural Landscapes of urban heritage or heritage in an urban environment. It should be re-emphasized that impact assessments need to be seen primarily as useful tools to support decision making by the relevant national authorities rather than documents that need to be assessed by the Advisory Bodies.

76. The impact assessment is not an end in itself, but should be imbedded in management mechanisms and legal frameworks. Whilst many existing legislative frameworks around the world already include provisions for the EIA process, including in some cases the need to assess cultural heritage, a requirement to specifically assess impact on OUV of cultural and natural World Heritage properties is often missing. In recognition of this situation, IUCN's Environmental Law Centre has expressed its interest in undertaking a review, subject to availability of resources, to identify where and how the assessment of impacts on OUV required by the *Convention* can be integrated into existing legal frameworks to ensure a streamlining of impact assessment requirements and terminology. The Advisory Bodies also recognize that there is a need to streamline their advice on impact assessment, and note their preparedness to develop, subject to the availability of resources, one single guidance document on the assessment of impacts on OUV of both natural and cultural properties. The World Heritage Centre aims to develop guidance tools and training programmes with the Advisory Bodies.

F. Integrated management, Decision making and Governance

77. A number of properties are reported to be facing challenges related to the coordination of management and decision making processes where different authorities are involved. This may be the case with mixed properties (for example, Wadi Rum Protected Area (Jordan)), where the management of natural and cultural values of the property fall under the responsibilities of different ministries.
78. In addition, both contiguous and serial natural properties may consist of several protected areas that each have their own management plan (for example: Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas (Zimbabwe)), or federal and regional protected areas administered at different levels of government as in the case of Volcanoes of Kamchatka (Russian Federation).
79. It is therefore important to reiterate that an integrated approach to planning and management is essential to ensure maintenance of all aspects of Outstanding Universal Value, in accordance with Paragraph 112 of the *Operational Guidelines*, and that a management system which ensures a coordinated management of all components is an essential requirement for all serial properties, in accordance with Paragraph 114 of the *Operational Guidelines*. Furthermore, the case of transboundary properties is particularly complex (for example: Talamanca Range-La Amistad Reserves/La Amistad National Park (Costa Rica/Panama); Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan)) and requires the establishment by the States Parties concerned of a joint management committee or similar body to oversee the management of the whole transboundary property, in accordance with Paragraph 135 of the *Operational Guidelines*. It is recommended that a joint management approach or other appropriate mechanism for cooperation is also adopted by States Parties where properties on either side of the international border are contiguous, but separately inscribed on the World Heritage List (for example: Iguazú National Park (Argentina) and Iguaçu National Park (Brazil)).
80. On the other hand, there is often a lack of coordination between different ministries and agencies, for example where permits for certain types of resource use or activities

within a natural property are granted by an authority other than the one responsible for the management of the property. The state of conservation report for Plitvice Lakes National Park (Croatia) for instance, notes that repeated concerns expressed by the management authority of the property with regards to the procedures for issuing construction permits within the property have not been addressed by the relevant planning authorities. In this regard it is recommended that States Parties are encouraged to promote recognition and awareness across all relevant national and regional agencies of the World Heritage status of the properties on their territory, and to develop mechanisms to ensure consideration of impacts on Outstanding Universal Value in the decision making processes of relevant ministries, before permits are issued. The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act) of Australia is a good example of environmental legislation that provides such a mechanism. The World Heritage Working Group established under the Coordinating Ministry of People Welfare of Indonesia or the national inter-ministerial committee in Tanzania are good examples of institutional mechanisms that enable coordination among ministries.

G. Ground transport infrastructures

81. As mentioned in Paragraph 7 above, state of conservation reports for 2016 show that 19% of all properties reported issues related to the construction of ground transportation infrastructure. This infrastructure affects both cultural and natural properties and can take the form of roadways and rail lines above ground (open roadways and train tracks) and underground infrastructure (road and train tunnels). In urban settings, this infrastructure may sometimes include metro systems which may include one or more metro stations attached.
82. These varying configurations of ground infrastructure have many potential impacts on World Heritage properties including visual impacts on properties and their settings, damage to archaeology, severing of archaeological remains from their context leading to a loss of coherence and understanding, pollution and runoff, and fragmentation of natural ecosystems and creation of barriers for the movement of wildlife. Underground infrastructure also may cause problems with vibrations and potential damage to the archaeological heritage, as well as a variety of problems associated with metro stations and their impact on the urban environment. An additional concern regarding transportation infrastructure is that it may result in increased levels of illegal activities, such as poaching and illegal logging, both during construction and afterwards, including through increased access to previously remote natural areas. Transportation infrastructure also often brings uncontrolled development in its wake, putting even more pressure on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage properties over time. As the world continues to urbanize and more and more transportation infrastructure is needed both within urban areas and in connecting rural and urban areas, it is expected that this problem will continue to increase in the future.
83. The key to dealing with ground transportation infrastructure is, first, to ensure that transportation planners at the national, regional, and local levels are aware of the World Heritage properties and their OUV long before any planning exercises begin. Potential issues and threats should be identified as early as possible, including through strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) to assess and manage potential long term impacts from the transport project itself and from associated future development. This step will allow for impacts to be understood at the earliest stages of the planning process, meaning that governments can consider potential impacts on OUV before specific projects are planned. Once projects have been planned, EIAs and/or HIAs should be carried out. These assessments should include multiple options which can be used to meet transportation needs, while ensuring minimal impacts on the OUV of World Heritage properties. There is a need however to ensure both political

commitment, as well as strong technical advice and support (urban and transportation planners, structural engineers, biologists, etc.).

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 40 COM 7

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/16/40.COM/7, WHC/16/40.COM/7A, WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add, WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add.2, WHC/16/40.COM/7B, WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add and WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision 39 COM 7, adopted at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015),

Emergency situation resulting from conflicts

3. Deplores the conflict situation prevailing in several countries, the loss of human life as well as the degradation of humanitarian conditions and expresses its utmost concern at the damage sustained and the threats facing cultural and natural heritage in general;
4. Urges all parties associated with conflicts to refrain from any action that would cause further damage to cultural and natural heritage and to fulfil their obligations under international law by taking all possible measures to protect such heritage, in particular the safeguarding of World Heritage properties and the sites included in the Tentative List;
5. Also urges the States Parties to adopt measures against World Heritage properties being used for military purposes;
6. Takes note of the progress made by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to launch a reflection on a post-conflict recovery strategy, and of the support extended so far through technical assistance, capacity-building, and exchange of best practices in this regard, and recommends that further support for threatened or damaged World Heritage properties be pursued;
7. Notes with concern that the conflict situation in several countries in the world has increased considerably the work load of the World Heritage Centre staff, and that an adequate implementation of the Action Plans for the Emergency Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Mali, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen requires additional financial and human resources at the World Heritage Centre and in the UNESCO field offices; also notes the increased demands on the resources of the Advisory Bodies;
8. Calls on the international community to provide financial support for the implementation of the UNESCO Action Plans for the Emergency Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, including for additional human resources at the World Heritage Centre and in the UNESCO field offices;
9. Also expresses its utmost concern about the impacts of conflicts causing an escalation of the already severe poaching crisis, as armed groups are financing their activities through illegal wildlife trade, which is having a severe impact on African wildlife, threatening the very survival of species and the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage properties;

10. Launches an appeal to all Member States of UNESCO to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage objects and illegal wildlife trade, including through the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and to pursue the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199 of February 2015 regarding Syria and Iraq;

Other conservation issues

Reconstruction

11. Noting that the recent and wide-ranging deliberate destruction of World Heritage properties as a result of armed conflict in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Mali and Nigeria, and the devastating earthquakes in Nepal, have brought sharply into focus the issue of reconstruction in World Heritage properties; that several international meetings have taken place or are being planned on reconstruction; and that guidance within the Operational Guidelines is currently inadequate,
12. Recommends that more in depth reflection is needed on reconstruction within World Heritage properties as a complex multi-disciplinary process, and that consideration should be given to developing new guidance to reflect the multi-faceted challenges that reconstruction brings, its social and economic context, the short- and long-term needs of properties, and the idea of reconstruction as a process that should be undertaken within the framework of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the properties;

Climate Change

13. Taking note of the agreement reached during the 21st conference (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in 2015, requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to assist States Parties to implement appropriate management responses to the adverse effects of Climate Change;
14. Recommends that the World Heritage Centre strengthen its relations with other organizations working on Climate Change, particularly with the UNFCCC and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) secretariats, and specifically with regard to the effect of Climate Change on World Heritage properties, and also requests the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to work with IPCC with the objective of including a specific chapter on natural and cultural World Heritage in future IPCC assessment reports;
15. Further requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to periodically review and update the Policy Document on the Impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage properties”, so as to make available the most current knowledge and technology on the subject to guide the decisions and actions of the World Heritage community;

Dams

16. Notes with significant concern that an increasing number of properties are facing potential threats from major dam projects, considers that the construction of dams with large reservoirs within the boundaries of World Heritage properties is incompatible with their World Heritage status, and urges States Parties to ensure that the impacts from dams that could affect properties located upstream or downstream within the same river basin are rigorously assessed in order to avoid impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);

Extractive industries

17. *Noting with significant concern that World Heritage properties are increasingly threatened by extractive industries, as confirmed by the 2014 IUCN World Heritage Outlook report, by the World Heritage Centre's analysis of issues reported in state of conservation reports also revealing the potential threat from extractive activities to cultural properties, and by the 2016 report by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), welcomes the "No-go" commitments to World Heritage properties made by Tullow Oil plc and CEMEX in November 2015 and April 2016 respectively, and reiterates its call on other extractive industry companies and investment banks to follow these examples to further extend the "No-go" commitment;*
18. *Recalling Decision **37 COM 7**, once again urges all States Parties to the Convention and leading industry stakeholders to respect the "No-go" commitment by not permitting extractive activities within World Heritage properties, and by making every effort to ensure that extractives companies located in their territory cause no damage to World Heritage properties, in line with Article 6 of the Convention;*

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) / Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs)

19. *Notes with concern that a majority of properties potentially affected by proposed development projects, proposed legal instruments, and proposed management systems have not benefited from an assessment of impacts on their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) in line with IUCN's World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment and ICOMOS' Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties, and requests all States Parties to the Convention to ensure that potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on the OUV, including from projects located outside the boundaries of natural and/or cultural World Heritage properties, are specifically assessed within the framework of the EIA and HIA required by the applicable laws and regulations, and that reports of such assessments are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;*
20. *Recalls Article 6 of the Convention according to which "Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage [...] situated on the territory of other States Parties to this Convention", and also requests all States Parties to the Convention to ensure that EIAs and HIAs include an assessment of impacts on the OUV of World Heritage properties situated on the territory of other States Parties, as appropriate;*
21. *Further requests the Advisory Bodies, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre, to consider opportunities to streamline their guidance on impact assessment in order to develop one single guidance document for the assessment of impacts on both natural and cultural properties;*

Integrated management, Decision making, Governance

22. *Noting with concern that the lack of an integrated management approach is reported to cause challenges to the coordination of management and decision making processes of properties where different authorities are involved, in particular in the cases of mixed, serial, and transboundary properties, urges States Parties to establish appropriate mechanisms in order to facilitate a coordinated approach to the management of all properties, in line with the requirements of the Operational Guidelines as laid out in Paragraphs 112, 114, and 135, and encourages States Parties with contiguous natural properties on either side of their international borders, which*

are not listed as transboundary properties, to establish appropriate mechanisms for cooperation between their respective management authorities and ministries;

23. *Also encourages States Parties to promote recognition and awareness across all relevant national and regional agencies of the World Heritage status of the properties on their territory, and to develop mechanisms to ensure consideration of impacts on Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) in the decision making processes of relevant ministries, before permits are issued for developments that could negatively impact the OUV;*

Ground transport infrastructures

24. *Notes with concern that the number of cases of ground transport infrastructure having potential impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage properties is continuing to grow, and calls upon States Parties to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) early in the process of transportation planning to allow for potential impacts of the OUV, including those resulting from foreseeable associated future developments, to be identified prior to the development of specific projects;*
25. *Encourages States Parties to carry out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) on ground transport projects, once they are designed, with multiple options to ensure that transportation needs can be met with minimal impacts on the OUV of World Heritage properties.*