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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

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Bonn, Germany

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

SUMMARY

This document is meant to present 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 39th session.

The document is composed of four parts: a statistical summary (Introduction), a focus on the emergency situation resulting from conflicts in the Arab States region (Part I), a synthesis of emerging and recurring conservation issues which might have strategic consequences (Part II) and a proposal regarding knowledge management of state of conservation reports (Part III).

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

Draft Decision: 39 COM 7, see Part IV.

INTRODUCTION

1. As part of the Reactive Monitoring process¹, the World Heritage Committee will examine at its 39th session the reports on the state of conservation of 141 World Heritage properties (Agenda items 7A and 7B), including the 46 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:
 - 46 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Agenda item 7A);
 - 73 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);
 - 7 properties for which, upon inscription on the World Heritage List, a follow-up was requested by the World Heritage Committee (Agenda item 7B);
 - 15 properties, which have come under threat since the 38th 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 141 properties for examination are distributed as follows:

Agenda item 7A Documents WHC-15/39.COM/7A Documents WHC-15/39.COM/7A.Add	NAT	CLT	total
AFR	13	3	16
ARB	0	13	13
APA	2	2	4
EUR/NA	1	4	5
LAC	3	5	8
Total	19	27	46

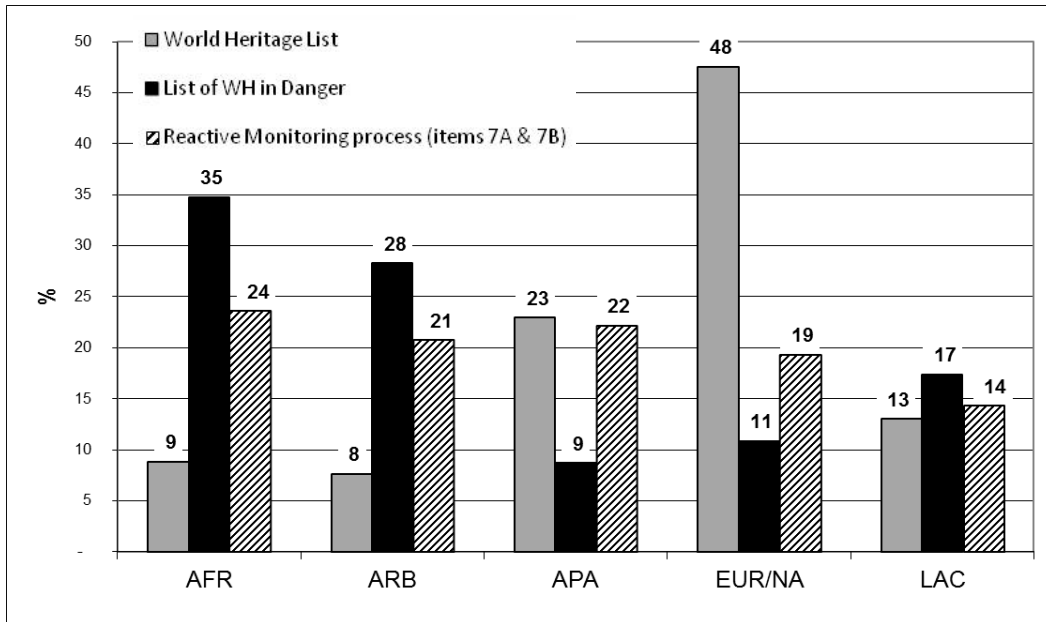
Agenda item 7B Document WHC-15/39.COM/7B Document WHC-15/39.COM/7B.Add	NAT	MIX	CLT	total
AFR	5	3	9	17
ARB	1	0	15	16
APA	11	1	15	27
EUR/NA	9	0	14	23
LAC	5	1	6	12
Total	31	5	59	95

4. These 141 properties represent 14% of all the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. Significant variations among the regions are noticeable (see below Chart 1). For example, Africa is one of the regions where issues of conservation are crucial.

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>

35% of all properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (item 7A) are African World Heritage properties, although they represent today only 9% of the World Heritage List. 24% of the Africa region properties are subject to a state of conservation report for the 39th session (items 7A and 7B). This situation is also true for the Arab States region with 8% of World Heritage properties and 28% of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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 20% of the World Heritage List, they account for over 40% of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (see Chart 2 below).

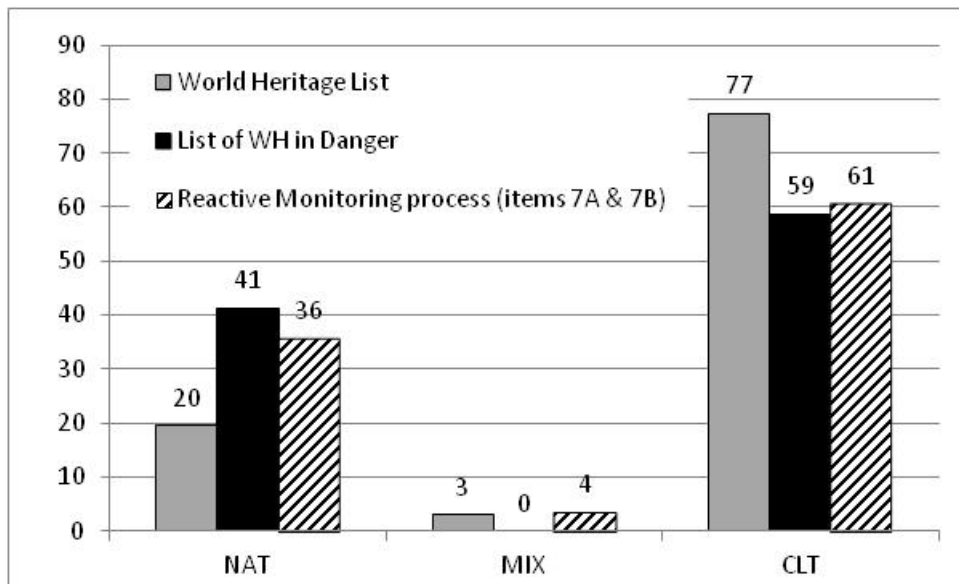


Chart 2: Percentage of properties of each category (natural, mixed, cultural)

6. The 141 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 over 60 different factors affecting these properties have been identified, with an average of 4 factors affecting each property, which emphasizes the risk of the cumulative impact of threats on the OUV.

7. Globally, the top 15 factors affecting the properties reported on in 2015 are the following ones:

Factors	Percentage of the reported properties affected
Management systems/ management plan (lack of / inadequate)	66%
Housing	33%
Illegal activities (e.g. poaching, illegal timber exploitation, etc.)	28%
Ground transport infrastructure	19%
Land conversion	19%
War and Civil unrest	18%
Mining, oil and gas (exploration and/or exploitation)	18%
Management activities	17%
Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation	16%
Legal framework(lack of / inadequate)	14%
Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community	11%
Livestock farming / grazing of domesticated animals	11%
Water infrastructure	10%
Human resources (insufficient staffing level and/or need for capacity building)	10%
Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure	9%

8. Factors affecting the World Heritage properties vary according to the category of heritage considered. The table below presents the top 10 factors affecting respectively natural and cultural properties, as identified in the SOC reports presented in 2015:

Natural properties		Cultural properties	
Factors	Percentage of the reported properties affected	Factors	Percentage of the reported properties affected
Illegal activities	54%	Management systems/ management plan	74%
Management systems/ management plan	52%	Housing	49%
Land conversion	32%	Management activities	26%
Mining	30%	Ground transport infrastructure	15%
Livestock farming / grazing of domesticated animals	26%	Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation	15%
Ground transport infrastructure	24%	War	12%
Water infrastructure	24%	Human resources	12%
Civil unrest	20%	Legal framework	12%
Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community	16%	Land conversion	12%
Oil and gas	16%	Illegal activities	12%
Legal framework	14%	Deliberate destruction of heritage	11%
Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation	14%	Erosion and siltation/ deposition	9%
Financial resources	12%	Water (rain/water table)	8%
Fire (wildfires)	10%	Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community	8%
Major linear utilities	10%	Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure	8%

9. More detailed statistics can be found at the following webpage <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc> (search for “2015”, then “Views” and “Statistics”).
10. The following parts of the document present insights on specific factors, such as conflict situation in the Arab States, invasive species, major revitalization projects, and tourism. It also includes information on the role of impact assessments for development projects.
11. The World Heritage Centre wishes to underline that a limited percentage of the state of conservation reports requested by the World Heritage Committee to States Parties was submitted within the statutory deadline of 1 February 2015. Indeed, at this date, only 46% of the requested reports had been received by the World Heritage Centre; 72% was received by the end of February 2015 and 87% by the end of March 2015. At the time of drafting this document, 11 reports had not yet been submitted.
12. 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, sometimes crucial, at stake. Furthermore, late submissions also lead to an increasing number of SOC reports being included in the Addendum documents (7A.Add and 7B.Add), hence reducing the time available for Committee members to review these reports before the Committee session. 85 reports were made available on the first statutory deadline for dispatch of documents, on 15 May 2015 (documents WHC-15/39.COM/7A and 7B) and 56 remaining reports were made available on the second dispatch, on 29 May 2015 (documents WHC-15/39.COM/7A.Add and 7B.Add).

I. CONFLICT SITUATION IN THE ARAB STATES REGION

13. Conflicts continue to represent a major threat to World Heritage properties. In 2015, 18% of the properties reported at the 39th session of the Committee are located in conflict areas (either wars or civil unrest) and are at risk. Actions are being undertaken to monitor and/or safeguard this heritage.
14. More specifically, the Arab Region is affected by distressing conflicts. In Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, due to armed conflicts and political instability, the humanitarian conditions are 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.
15. 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, in addition to intentional destructions, use for military purposes, such as training areas, and inappropriate use of archaeological sites by internally displaced populations (for further details, see Document WHC-15/39.COM/7A).
16. In Iraq, the situation has dramatically deteriorated since 2014, with the rise of extremist armed 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. The World Heritage properties of Ashur, Samarra Archaeological City and Hatra are located in highly volatile conflict areas where destruction, looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property

has 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. Videos have shown extensive damage to artefacts in the Mosul Museum, intentional destructions of sculpted elements in the City of Hatra as well as the blowing up of the Northwestern palace in Nimrud. Damages have been confirmed by UNOSAT (UNITAR) satellite imagery monitoring. The State Party has reported that Samarra Archaeological City has been vandalized by local armed groups. Vandalism includes displaying religious signs within the site and on the Malwiya (Spiral Minaret).

17. In Libya, the rising insecurity places the World Heritage properties of the Archaeological Site of Sabratha, the Archaeological Site of Cyrene and the Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna at a high level of risk. Sources reported possible vandalism and looting at the Archaeological Site of Cyrene but, due to the situation on the ground, the information could not be verified and the State Party did not submit a report on the property's state of conservation, as per Decision **35 COM 7B.2**. According to other sources, several cultural sites have been affected: the Museum in Darnah has been reportedly vandalized and the palace of King Idris damaged by illegal occupation. The ancient Roman site in Umm al Shuga has reportedly been looted as well as the Museum in Apollonia. So far, the National Museum is protected. Sources also report that armed groups stormed and vandalized Tripoli's historic Karamanli Mosque, damaged and looted the historic Othman Pasha Madrassa. As for the Ottoman Darghout Mosque, local volunteers protected it from vandalism.
18. In Yemen, the State Party reports that the country continues to suffer significant political and socio-economic disturbances that ultimately affect heritage preservation. No precise reports have been yet made available following the airstrikes in April 2015. 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. Progress has been made through small scale conservation initiatives and with discussion on how to foster greater engagement of the local communities; moreover the State Party is implementing the International Assistance for the Conservation of the Old City of Sana'a.
19. 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. She also appealed to the international community to mobilize for the protection of the endangered cultural sites in the region through the launching of an international awareness raising campaign: **#UNITE4HERITAGE**.
20. UNESCO's sustained efforts led to the adoption by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) of Resolution 2199. The Resolution condemned the destruction of cultural heritage and adopted legally binding measures to counter illicit trafficking of antiquities and cultural objects from Iraq and Syria. It called on UNESCO and other concerned entities to ensure the implementation of these measures.
21. Since the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee (Doha, 2014), and in each of these countries, UNESCO has pursued its activities to monitor the situation of cultural heritage at the national level. Such monitoring includes raising awareness on its protection, undertaking short, medium and long-term actions to safeguard it, and coordinating the work of national and international entities working for its safeguarding. For Syria, and in the framework of the European Union-funded "Emergency Safeguarding of Syrian Cultural Heritage", a reflection meeting on post-war reconstruction, with a focus on Aleppo, is under preparation at the World Heritage Centre (for further details, see Document WHC-15/39.COM/7A). In Iraq, based on the

Emergency Safeguarding Action Plan adopted at UNESCO on 17 July 2014, a project entitled “Awareness Raising for Mitigating Risks of Destruction and Looting of Cultural Heritage”, funded by the government of Norway for the amount of USD 154,000, is about to start implementation. The Government of Japan is funding a USD 1.5 million project for the preventive conservation of museum’s collections and the monitoring and assessment of endangered cultural sites. In Libya, since the beginning of its action, UNESCO has been focusing on capacity-building and technical skills improvement, notably on first-aid actions, in order to protect cultural heritage against illicit trafficking and vandalism at archaeological sites and museums. In this context, the UNESCO-ICCROM Regional Programme on Risk Preparedness was held in Cairo, in January 2015. An important work is also being carried out on the updating of existing inventories and the monitoring of the situation at the most exposed sites. Awareness raising actions and educational activities, involving local communities, have also been implemented. The necessary funding for the implementation of these actions has been and will continue to be provided by the Governments of Libya and Italy.

II. EMERGING AND RECURRING CONSERVATION ISSUES

A. Invasive species

22. Among the 55 SOC reports on natural and mixed properties prepared for consideration at the 39th session, invasive alien species issue was raised as a concern in the 11 following properties: Dja Faunal Reserve (Cameroon), East Rennell (Solomon Islands), Everglades National Park (USA), Lakes of Ounianga (Chad), Maloti-Drakensberg Park (Lesotho/South Africa), Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India), Ngorongoro Conservation Area (Tanzania), Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal), Selous Game Reserve (Tanzania), Socotra Archipelago (Yemen) and Tasmanian Wilderness (Australia).
23. Rodents, cats, pythons, certain ant, fish and bird species, snails and various plants are some of the main invasive alien species affecting World Heritage properties. In East Rennell (Solomon Islands) for example, introduced rats, unless they are eradicated, have a high possibility of causing irreparable damage to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Invasive plant species pose a significant threat to properties such as Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India) and Ngorongoro Conservation Area (Tanzania), where a control strategy and a management plan are required.
24. IUCN notes that its first global assessment of natural World Heritage properties, the IUCN World Heritage Outlook 2014, identified invasive alien species to be one of the most serious current threats to natural World Heritage. It found invasive alien species to be currently affecting 62 properties, with another 14 properties under potential threat. In Oceania, invasive species were found to be the greatest threat to natural World Heritage affecting 15 natural sites in the region and 68% of the total number of natural properties. .

B. Major revitalization projects

25. An increasing number of state of conservation (SOC) reports refers to the need for major revitalisation projects to address multi-faceted conservation challenges, particularly in urban, but also in rural, areas. The well-being of societies is a key factor in achieving suitable development and conservation commitments. Fostering economic and social development can thus sometimes be the best way to sustain the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), while at the same time, benefiting local communities.
26. This approach has been proposed for Historic Cairo (Egypt) this year and the State Party authorities recognized that the severe challenges faced by the physical fabric of

the property necessitated a holistic approach. Such an approach would seek to revitalise, not only the buildings, but the underlying economic and social structures. A similar approach would also be needed for the Historic Town of Zabid (Yemen), if the city is to recover its rationale, as a place of trade and business and the traditional buildings are to be restored. The extensive work undertaken by the State Party of China to put in place support to allow rice farmers of the Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces to add value to local produce, and the need for similar measures in the Cultural Landscape of Bali Province (Indonesia), show how revitalising economic and social structures is essential to sustaining the fabric of highly distinctive landscapes.

27. These examples highlight how it can be beneficial to support traditional resilience of urban and rural landscapes, as a conservation tool; but they also bring in to focus the challenge, as to how advice might be offered to properties where such an approach could be beneficial, but where management structures are not adequate to deal with the wide ranging and interdisciplinary approaches required.

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

28. Infrastructure and development projects continue to be one of the main factors affecting World Heritage properties. While it is recognised that conservation is not opposed to development, which brings both positive and negative impacts. The challenge is to minimise the impact of development activities while at the same time delivering reciprocal benefits to both heritage and to wider society.
29. A key tool in achieving this balance is a formal impact assessment of potential projects at an early stage in their development, in order to understand their potential impact on Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). To support this process, the Advisory Bodies have developed guidance on impact assessments for both cultural and natural properties (available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>), and have also undertaken capacity-building activities on their implementation.
30. For impact assessment tools to be most effective, they should be used routinely, as part of the overall planning processes, to allow all those involved in the management of World Heritage properties to be fully aware of the impacts of projects before decisions are taken. For large projects, where there is potential for impact on OUV, and where plans need to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in line with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, it is essential that those plans submitted should have been informed by the results of impact assessments. Indeed, impact assessments need to be seen primarily as useful tools to support decision making at the property level rather than documents that need to be assessed by the Advisory Bodies.
31. While the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process has been integrated into the legislative frameworks in many countries, Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) are not always part of this process. States Parties are encouraged to integrate EIA/HIA processes into legislation, planning mechanisms and management plans (Kathmandu Valley Management plan has made it mandatory to conduct HIA before submitting any development proposal for approval). They are also encouraged to use tools, such as ICOMOS Guidance on HIAs, and IUCN Advice Note on EIAs, and to develop the capacities of practitioners, including through training activities organised by ICCROM.

D. Tourism

32. The UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme (WH+ST), which was adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session (Saint-Petersburg, 2012), provides an international framework for the cooperative and coordinated

achievement of shared and sustainable outcomes related to tourism at World Heritage properties. Such outcomes include sustainability, national pride, community benefit, economic development and heritage conservation.

33. Significant progress has been made with regard to capacity development for World Heritage site managers and other tourism stakeholders. A capacity-building tool (“How To Guides”) has been developed. The tool focuses on 10 core issues² and is supplemented by case studies and a good practice library (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism>). This tool, which is the result of extensive outreach to over 500 heritage and tourism professionals, underwent further testing in a number of pilot sites in the Nordic-Baltic region, in the Africa region (including the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (Tanzania) and Maloti-Drakensberg Park (South Africa/Lesotho) for which state of conservation reports are presented this year) and in the South-East Asia region (including the Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy (Indonesia) for which state of conservation report is presented this year), and where workshops are being held to provide World Heritage stakeholders with the capacity to manage tourism efficiently, responsibly and sustainably based on the local context and needs. Through the Nordic Baltic process an analytical framework was developed that features a sustainable tourism checklist to help World Heritage properties establish a baseline for sustainable tourism. The checklist compliments the “How To Guides” and will be further developed as an additional tool for site managers.
34. In February 2015, the UNESCO/UNWTO Global Conference on Culture and Tourism took place in Siem Reap (Cambodia) and brought together, for the first time, ministers of culture and tourism to explore and advance new partnership models between tourism and culture. In this framework, UNESCO will pursue a goal of supporting governments and local stakeholders to safeguard heritage, strengthen creative industries and encourage cultural pluralism through tourism.
35. Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing global tourism markets. Culture and creative industries are increasingly being used to promote destinations and enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness. Many locations are now actively developing their cultural assets as a means of developing comparative advantages in an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace, and to create local distinctiveness in the face of globalisation.
36. UNESCO will endeavour to create networks of key stakeholders to coordinate the destination management and marketing associated with the different heritage routes to promote and coordinate high-quality, unique experiences based on UNESCO recognized heritage. The goal is to promote sustainable development based on heritage values and create added tourist value for the sites.

² The 10 core issues are as follows:

- 1 – Understanding Tourism at the Destination
- 2 – Developing a Strategy for Progressive Change
- 3 – Developing Effective Governance
- 4 – Engaging Local Communities and Businesses
- 5 – Communicating with Visitors
- 6 – Managing the Development of Tourism Infrastructure
- 7 – Adding Value through Products, Experiences, and Services
- 8 – Managing Visitor Behaviour
- 9 – Securing Funding and Investment
- 10 – Monitoring Success

E. Climate Change

37. Climate change is a major threat to both cultural and natural heritage. While for many properties it currently remains a potential threat, in many others the impacts of climate change are already noticeable. This is reflected in a growing number of SOC reports highlighting this issue. Properties affected by climate change for which a SOC report is at the 39th session include Great Barrier Reef (Australia), East Rennell (Solomon Islands), and The Sundarbans (Bangladesh).
38. Marine and coastal sites represent a specific subset of natural properties affected by climate change through sea level rise, ocean acidification and increased frequency and severity of storms. Besides impacting on the lives of local communities, these factors cause significant changes both to the ecosystems and natural phenomena that justify the Outstanding Universal Value of those properties. This is the case in East Rennell where the increasing salinity of Lake Tegano has resulted in reduced freshwater supply and food shortages as some of the traditional crops grown there proved to be sensitive to water salinity.
39. The IUCN World Heritage Outlook 2014 found climate change to be already affecting 35 natural properties worldwide (15% of the total number of natural properties). It was also assessed as the most serious potential threat to natural World Heritage.
40. To limit the impacts of climate change on marine World Heritage properties for example, it is important to limit other factors that negatively impact on conservation, as much as possible, and increase the resilience of these sites. Healthy reefs are less prone to coral bleaching, and recover faster from bleaching events. Marine environments that are in a good state can better cope with agricultural runoff and eutrophication. The World Heritage Centre's Marine Programme assists States Parties to deal with these conservation and management challenges by organizing technical workshops about compliance management, increasing the capacity to enforce legislation and limiting unsustainable fishing practices, among others, and facilitates the exchange of best practices, via the marine World Heritage site managers network (for the Great Barrier Reef (Australia) and the Belize Barrier Reserve System (Belize) for example).
41. Cultural World Heritage properties are also impacted by climate change. The case of Chief Roi Mata's Domain (Vanuatu), affected by the tropical Cyclone Pam, in March 2015, is the most recent example of such an impact.
42. Development and implementation of adaptation measures at the sites' level is an important strategy and requires support and capacity-building actions. However, only coordinated efforts at global scale can help address the issue. Highlighting the fact that World Heritage properties are being increasingly affected by climate change can help raise awareness of the issue among decision-makers. In this regard, the World Heritage Centre has published a practical guide on climate change adaptation for natural World Heritage properties (World Heritage Paper no. 37, available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/series/37/>).
43. UNESCO is fully mobilized for the successful organization of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) due to take place in December 2015 in Paris (France). UNESCO is especially collaborating with its organizers to ensure relevant communication on the opportunities the World Heritage properties provide for promoting on-the-ground climate change mitigation and adaptation work, networking and targeted-U.N. collaboration around the world (see page <http://en.unesco.org/themes/cop21>). World Heritage properties will be at the forefront of a number of events organized throughout 2015, leading up to COP21, such as World Oceans Day on 8 June 2015, and through an exhibition on the impacts of climate change on mountain regions of the world, in

partnership with the UNESCO Science Sector, to be displayed on the outside fence of UNESCO Headquarters.

44. When adopting its "Policy Document on the Impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage Properties" at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007) (Decision **31 COM 7.1**, see Document WHC-07/31.COM/7.1), the World Heritage Committee also urged the States Parties to participate in the UNFCCC conferences "with a view to achieving a comprehensive post-Kyoto agreement, and to fund and support the research needs as identified in Annex 1 of the Policy Document", and adopted a carbon neutral policy for all future World Heritage Committee sessions, to the extent feasible.

F. Cooperation with the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

45. In its Decisions **32 COM 7B.25** and **35 COM 7B.24**, the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to develop a dialogue with the IOC with a view of putting in place an agreement to ensure that future Games will not impact on the OUV of World Heritage properties.
46. On 17 April 2014, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN had a constructive meeting with a delegation from IOC to follow up on these decisions, where the possibility was discussed to put in place a mechanism that would allow identifying potential impacts on World Heritage sites early on in the process of attributing the Games.
47. Following the above-mentioned meeting, the IOC requested IUCN to review the IOC's 2020 Candidature Acceptance Procedure and the 2022 Candidature Procedure and Questionnaire, and to provide advice on the inclusion of a principle and question relating to natural World Heritage properties within these documents. IUCN provided its comments to the IOC on 3 November 2014, and also drew IOC's attention to the possibility to contact the other Advisory Bodies regarding cultural aspects.
48. The IOC subsequently submitted two candidature files for the 2022 Winter Olympics to IUCN with a request for comments on potential overlaps with natural World Heritage properties. IUCN provided advice to IOC on natural World Heritage properties, including existing properties, nominated properties undergoing evaluation at that time, and sites included on the Tentative Lists of the countries concerned. IUCN recommended that IOC raise any overlaps with the candidatures as part of their screening process.

III. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS

49. The amount of information provided by the States Parties through their state of conservation reports can vary from a few pages to thousands of pages, along with maps, annexes, etc. There are also important differences in the quality of the information provided in the States Parties reports, which do not always address the requests placed by the World Heritage Committee in its previous decisions.
50. At its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007), the World Heritage Committee invited States Parties to use the following specific format to facilitate the preparation of their reports on the state of conservation (SOC) of their properties (Decision **31 COM 7B.131**):

Name of World Heritage property (State Party) (Identification number)

1. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision, paragraph by paragraph

[Note: this information has to refer to developments over the past year or since the last decision of the Committee for this property]

or

1. In case the property is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger:
 - a) Corrective measures taken by the State Party in reply to the World Heritage Committee's Decision(s)
 - b) Progress towards the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger
 - c) If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing the corrective measures identified
[Note: please, provide factual information, including exact dates, figures etc. and provide comments separately]
 - d) Is the timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose a justified alternative.

In all cases:

2. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party
[Note: conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the World Heritage Committee or any information request from the World Heritage Centre]
 3. In conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, please describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area (core zone and buffer zone and/or corridors) that might be envisaged.
51. This format was adopted as an indicative format, but was not made compulsory, as were the formats to submit Tentative Lists or Nominations to the World Heritage List. This indicative format is not widely followed by States Parties. This inevitably leads to a number of requests being placed by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for the States Parties to provide supplementary information, or to provide the information in one of the working languages of the Convention (English or French) and often delays the technical review of the information and the SOC report drafting process.
52. Considering the need to streamline and standardize the information provided by States Parties regarding the state of conservation of properties, it is proposed that the Committee adopts and makes compulsory a revised format for the submission of SOC reports by the States Parties:

Name of World Heritage property (State(s) Party(ies)) (Identification number)

1. Executive Summary of the report
[Note: each of the sections described below should be summarized. The maximum length of the executive summary is 1 page.]
2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee
[Note: State(s) Party(ies) are requested to address the most recent Decision of the World Heritage Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.]
If the property is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger
Please also provide detailed information on the following:
 - a) Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee
[Note: please address each corrective measure individually, providing factual information, including exact dates, figures, etc.]
If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing each of the corrective measures identified

- b) Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation why this alternative timeframe is required.
 - c) Progress achieved towards the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)
1. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value
[Note: this includes conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the World Heritage Committee or in any information request from the World Heritage Centre]
 2. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.
 3. Public access to the state of conservation report
[Note: this report will be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>). Should your State Party request that the full report should not be uploaded, only the 1-page executive summary provided in point (1.) above will be uploaded for public access].
 6. Signature of the Authority
53. It is proposed that this revised format be applied for the reports to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre as from the end of the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee. This revised format is also mentioned in Paragraph 169 of the proposed revision of the *Operational Guidelines* and integrated as Annex 13 thereof (see Document WHC-15/39.COM/11).

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision:39 COM 7

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-15/39.COM/7,*
2. *Recalling Decision**38 COM 7**, adopted at its 38th (Doha, 2014),*
Conflict situation in the Arab States Region
3. *Deplores the conflict situation prevailing in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, 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 these properties and cultural heritage in general;*
4. *Urges all parties associated with conflicts to refrain from any action that would cause further damage to cultural 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 for the evacuation of World Heritage properties being used for military purposes;*

6. *Launches an appeal to the neighbouring countries to Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen and to the international community to cooperate in combatting the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage, in particular coming from Syria and Iraq as per the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199 of February 2015;*

Emerging and recurring conservation issues

7. *Notes with concern the significant threat posed by invasive species to natural World Heritage properties, strongly encourages States Parties to develop adequately resourced strategies to eradicate invasive species in World Heritage properties and prevent their (re-)introduction and/or establishment, and also calls on the international community to support invasive species eradication campaigns in affected properties;*
8. *Taking note of the benefits to States Parties of systematically utilizing Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in the review of development projects, encourages States Parties to integrate the EIA/HIA processes into legislation, planning mechanisms and management plans, and reiterates its recommendation to States Parties to use these tools in assessing projects, as early as possible and before any final decision is taken, and, taking into account the need for capacity-building in this regard, requests the States Parties to contribute financially and technically towards the development of further guidance regarding EIA/HIA implementation, by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, based on case studies and field experience;*
9. *Acknowledging that World Heritage properties are being increasingly affected by Climate Change, also strongly encourages States Parties to participate in the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2015, with a view to achieving a universal climate agreement and mobilize global climate action on the ground, and recalls its Decision **31 COM 7.1**, adopted at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007) in which it adopted a carbon neutral policy, in view of its application for all future sessions, to the extent feasible;*
10. *Appreciates the constructive dialogue, which has taken place between the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, and also requests that this dialogue be extended to the other Advisory Bodies to ensure that cultural aspects are also taken into account in the future;*

Knowledge management of the state of conservation reports

11. *Recalling that States Parties concerned shall submit to the Committee through the Secretariat, by the statutory deadline set and in one of the working languages of the World Heritage Convention (English or French), their reports on the state of conservation of specific properties (Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines),*
12. *Adopts the revised format below for the submission of state of conservation reports by the States Parties, decides that this revised format is compulsory and applies with immediate effect, and that it should be included in the Operational Guidelines, and reminds States Parties that these reports must be submitted in one of the working languages of the Convention (English or French):*

Name of World Heritage property (State(s) Party(ies)) (Identification number)

1. Executive Summary of the report

[Note: each of the sections described below should be summarized. The maximum length of the executive summary is 1 page.]

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

[Note: State(s) Party(ies) are requested to address the most recent Decision of the World Heritage Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.]

If the property is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

Please also provide detailed information on the following:

d) Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee

[Note: please address each corrective measure individually, providing factual information, including exact dates, figures, etc.]

If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing each of the corrective measures identified

e) Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation why this alternative timeframe is required.

f) Progress achieved towards the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

[Note: this includes conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the World Heritage Committee or in any information request from the World Heritage Centre]

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

[Note: this report will be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>). Should your State Party request that the full report should not be uploaded, only the 1-page executive summary provided in point (1.) above will be uploaded for public access].

6. Signature of the Authority

13. Notes with appreciation the high number of States Parties which have authorized the public upload of their state of conservation reports, facilitating their consultation by all stakeholders of the Convention and contributing to an improved transparency of the reactive monitoring process, and reiterates its encouragement to all States Parties to continue do so in the future.