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

**CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**MEETING OF STATES PARTIES**

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**Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda Information Document 4.1**

**Secretariat's Report**

This document contains the Report of the Secretariat on its activities since the last session of the Meeting of States Parties in May 2013.

## Secretariat Report

### A. Statutory Meetings and Ratifications

#### I. Statutory Meetings

The **4th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB)** was organized by the Secretariat on 30 May 2013. The **5th Meeting of the STAB** took place on 11 June 2014. Both meetings focused on the elaboration of educational material and public heritage access.

The **STAB also assumed its assistance duties** during the year 2014. It was invited by the Bureau of the Meeting of States Parties to respond to the request of the Government of Haiti to evaluate a project concerning the possible find of the shipwreck of Columbus' *Santa Maria*. Upon evaluation by the Advisory Body, an initial proposed project was stopped, and a technical mission of the Advisory Body was sent to Haiti. The operational investigative mission collected information demonstrating that the site claimed to be the *Santa Maria* was, in fact, a more recent wreck. In this way a State Party to the Convention has been assisted in an effective, timely and low-cost manner in providing high-quality scientific advice. Follow-up assistance to Haiti is foreseen.

#### II. Ratifications

The States Parties underlined the goal to achieve wider ratification of the Convention as a priority. Indeed, **ratifications** have increased with four new States Parties (Bahrain, Guyana, Hungary, and Madagascar) since the last session of the Meeting of States Parties. To achieve this, information meetings, regional and national meetings were organized. These served to foster ratifications, but also assisted in the implementation of the Convention. Special focus was also put on increasing the profile of the Convention in presenting it at UN Headquarters in New York and at the Samoa UN meeting on Small Island Developing States (September 2014).

An information meeting for Permanent Delegations and Ambassadors was organized on 10 June 2014 at UNESCO Headquarters and focused on fostering ratifications and on the STAB and its contribution to the implementation of the 2001 Convention.

#### III. Regional and National Meetings

- **Regional Workshop on Cultural Heritage Laws for the Caribbean** (25-27 June 2013 Saint Kitts and Nevis), financed by Spain, focused on development, harmonization and adaptation of national laws to protect underwater cultural heritage. It was attended by the Minister of Culture of St Kitts and Nevis, representatives from several regional states, and international legal experts. Result was the adoption of the **UNESCO Model Law for the Protection of Cultural Heritage**, which provides an example for States wishing to improve the protection of their cultural heritage, in particular, underwater cultural heritage. It is based on the 2001 Convention and other UNESCO legal instruments and documents.
- **UNESCO Lima Regional Ministerial Meeting for the GRULAC Region** (16-17 October 2013 Lima, Peru) financed by Spain, attended by nine Ministers of Culture and selected high-level culture representatives from numerous GRULAC States. Issues discussed included capacity-building, protection and facilitating research. It recommended increasing ratification in the region and the establishment of a regional steering committee to assist with ratification and implementation of the 2001 Convention and underwater archaeology development.
- **First UNESCO Regional Meeting for Africa** (11-12 November 2013 in Yenagoa, Nigeria) financed by Spain. It was attended by representatives from 12 African countries and

international experts. Results included an African Action Plan for Safeguarding of Underwater Cultural Heritage. As a follow up to of this meeting, a **Second UNESCO Regional Meeting for Africa** has been convened in Malindi, Kenya in March 2015.

- **UNESCO Bahamas Steering Committee Meeting for the GRULAC Region** (16-18 July 2014) in follow-up of the 2013 Lima ministerial meeting, financed by Spain. It was attended by the Prime Minister, several Ministers and official representatives from 16 regional States, as well as international experts. It recommended the increased adoption of the UNESCO Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, the establishment of a regional database of underwater cultural heritage sites, the establishment of a regional network of organizations and competent authorities, and the organization of a training session on law enforcement and site protection.
- **UN Meeting on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development for SIDS** (21 April 2014 at the United Nations in New York). It highlighted the importance of underwater cultural heritage for SIDS sustainable development, as well as its role in the ocean environment.
- **UN - Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States** (Apia, Samoa, 1-4 September 2014). Events included a training day, a youth event, an intergovernmental meeting on underwater cultural heritage, and the participation in a high-level panel discussion in conjunction with the heads of State of Tuvalu and of Palau as well as the Under Secretary-General for Legal Affairs of the UN and the Vice-President of the World Bank. The events were attended by representatives from SIDS governments, experts and NGOs. A **new Pacific Region task group** was created.

*The foregoing two events were associated with the International Year of SIDS.*

- **UNESCO Regional Meeting for the East Southern Mediterranean** (30 September – 1 October 2014, International Centre of Category 2 for Underwater Archaeology of Zadar, Croatia). It was attended by representatives of 14 States. Results were the **proposal to create a regional task force** to intervene on underwater heritage sites, and the decision to more vigorously facilitate public access to underwater heritage.
- **Uruguayan national meeting** (Montevideo, Uruguay, July 2014) by the UNESCO Montevideo office in cooperation with HQ and financed by Spain.

#### **IV. Participation in Meetings**

In order to foster its visibility and to increase ratifications, the 2001 Convention Secretariat presented the 2001 Convention in the following meetings:

- High-level EU Meeting on Tourism, Athens, 10-11 March 2014, attended by Ministers of Tourism of the EU States and Director-Generals of the EU Commission.
- Berlin German Foreign Affairs Ministry Workshop on the 2001 Convention, which took place on 22 and 23 September 2014.
- Ningbo, China National Meeting - The meeting was attended by Chinese and international experts. It accompanied the opening of a new underwater cultural heritage museum and heritage base.
- Australian National Meeting 'Towards Ratification' of the 2001 Convention (4-6 October 2013).

## **B. Awareness-Raising, Education, Scientific Support**

To achieve wider acceptance of the Convention and greater public support in protecting underwater cultural heritage, awareness-raising and education is needed. This requires wide outreach to the scientific community. The numerous actions taken, ranged from the production of heritage illumination artworks, iPad applications for children, and a teacher's manual to scientific conferences and publications.

### **I. Public Events**

The main purpose of awareness-raising was to achieve the direct involvement of the public through events, public actions and displaying heritage in public spaces.

In implementation of the decision of the Meeting of States Parties (Resolution 4/MSP 4 paragraph 14), a major **Scientific Conference and a Commemoration Event** were organized in Bruges, Belgium (26-28 June 2014) on the occasion of the Centenary of the First World War, with financial and logistical support from the Government of Flanders, Belgium.

Complementary public outreach included a **Dive for Peace Day**, a **call on vessels** to signal at sea in support of UNESCO's objectives (both 28 June 2014) and the elaboration of a teachers' manual on peace education and underwater cultural heritage. A large public **City Illumination** highlighting WWI underwater cultural heritage organized in Bruges in June 2014 was attended by thousands of visitors.

### **II. Education**

The Secretariat produced the following tools:

- an **iPad/Android application** to raise awareness among the Youth. Financed by Spain, the application, foreseen for use on smartphones and tablets, is designed to enhance non-formal youth outreach.
- An **Educational Kit on Heritage and Reconciliation** focusing on integrating WWI underwater cultural heritage into peace education. It includes a brochure, two films and a teacher's manual.

### **III. Scientific Community Outreach**

To raise support for the Convention, the scientific community is a major partner as well as a beneficiary. Several scientific events were organized, a university network -launched in 2012- fostered, and the regional Centre for underwater archaeology in Zadar (Croatia) supported. The following events served also to raise public awareness.

#### **a. Scientific Conferences**

A major **Scientific Conference on underwater cultural heritage from World War I** was organized in Bruges, Belgium (26-28 June 2014) on the occasion of the Centenary of the First World War attended by some 150 experts and delegates (see above Public Events). A **Publication on Underwater Cultural Heritage from World War I** was moreover elaborated and includes the proceedings of the Bruges Conference on this topic.

An **Asia-Pacific Underwater Cultural Heritage Conference** (Honolulu, 12 - 16 May 2014) was co-organized on the occasion of the International Year of SIDS. The Conference was hosted by the University of Hawaii Marine Programme and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. UNESCO supported the participation of SIDS experts in the conference and led a session.

### **b. University Cooperation (UNITWIN)**

A second UNITWIN Network meeting took place in May 2014 and a third will take place in May 2015 in Kemer, Turkey. The prior was attended by representatives from the nine network member universities. New members from Poland, Japan, Cyprus and Germany joined. During the second meeting, the new Training Centre for Underwater Archaeology was inaugurated at Selçuk University. The Centre will serve to organize and conduct training and research activities for the network. The Centre has also recently been equipped with a research vessel the Selçuk-1, which provides operational capacity for training and research operations.

An initial international training course will be conducted by the Network to African countries in May 2015, in line with Priority Africa.

### **c. International Centre for Underwater Archaeology (Category II Centre)**

The International Centre for Underwater Archaeology is a UNESCO category 2 centre located in Zadar, Croatia, providing support for underwater archaeological research in the region. A new library has been opened, and a museum of underwater cultural heritage is under construction in a historic church complex. The contract of the Centre has to be renewed and the evaluation is ongoing. The question of the renewal will then be posed to the UNESCO Executive Board. The centre was crucial in the organization of the recent regional meeting for South-East Europe. The contract of the director has recently been renewed.

## **C. Assistance in the Implementation of Convention and Capacity-Building**

On several occasions, the States Parties underlined that capacity-building is a priority for them. It is important to enable national authorities and heritage professionals to implement the Convention and to achieve wide implementation. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints and lack of staff, only a limited number of actions have been taken. They were financed by extrabudgetary funds.

### **I. Trainings and Materials**

The following training was provided:

- A **Second Foundation Course** co-organized with the Dutch authorities on 17 November – 13 December 2014 in St Eustatius.
- A **South America Regional Training Course** on Underwater Cultural Heritage in Buenos Aires and Puerto Madryn, Argentina in November – December 2013 under the lead of a STAB member, Dolores Elkin, financed by Spain. This one-month course trained 10 students from South America. A network of South American experts in underwater cultural heritage was created.
- A **Workshop on Underwater Archaeology for the African Countries** in Kemer, Turkey from 6 to 17 May 2015 organized by the UNESCO UNITWIN network and coordinated by Selçuk University.

### **II. Culture and Development**

To illustrate the importance of underwater cultural heritage for development and employment, a new project financed by Spain, focusing on the Cervera fleet wrecks in Cuba has been launched by the UNESCO Havana Office focusing on the Cervera fleet wrecks in Cuba. This project is a follow-up to the study on underwater cultural heritage and development recently elaborated by UNESCO Secretariat.

#### **D. Challenges, Corrective Actions and Lessons Learnt**

The main challenge to the effective implementation of the programme remains the lack of human resources and funds. Only one staff member under the Regular Programme is fully and permanently attributed to the Secretariat of the Convention.