



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

World Heritage

44 COM

WHC/21/44.COM/7

Paris, 21 June 2021

Original: English / French

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Extended forty-fourth session

Fuzhou (China) / Online meeting
16 – 31 July 2021

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

SUMMARY

This document presents a global and analytical overview of Item 7 on the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties.

The document is composed of two main parts. After a statistical summary (Introduction), it presents progress achieved in a number of statutory matters related to Reactive Monitoring (Part I) and a focus on other conservation issues (Part II), which might have strategic or policy implications.

Draft Decisions: 44 COM 7.1 and 44 COM 7.2 see Part III.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
A. WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES REPORTED ON AT THE EXTENDED 44TH SESSION	2
B. THREATS AFFECTING THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES REPORTED ON AT THE EXTENDED 44TH SESSION.....	4
C. INFORMATION ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES.....	4
D. SELECTION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES TO BE PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION	5
E. FOURTH EDITION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGERS' FORUM	6
I. STATUTORY MATTERS RELATED TO REACTIVE MONITORING	7
A. EVALUATION OF THE REACTIVE MONITORING PROCESS	7
B. ISSUES RELATED TO THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER	8
B.1. COSTED ACTION PLANS AND DESIRED STATE OF CONSERVATION FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE PROPERTY FROM THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER (DSOCR).....	8
B.2. PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER FOR OVER 10 YEARS.....	10
B.3. IMPROVING THE PERCEPTION OF THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER	14
B.4. 'HERE' WORKSHOP	16
II. CONSERVATION ISSUES	17
A. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS RESULTING FROM CONFLICTS.....	17
B. RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION.....	19
C. POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK (GBF).....	22
D. BUFFER ZONES	25
E. "NO-GO" COMMITMENT.....	26
F. FIRE: IMPACTS & MANAGEMENT	28
G. URBAN PRESSURES ON CULTURAL WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES	30
H. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS	32
I. CONSERVATION OF FABRIC, SKILLS AND TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGIES.....	33
J. EARTH OBSERVATION FOR WORLD HERITAGE CONSERVATION.....	34
III. DRAFT DECISIONS	36

INTRODUCTION

A. World Heritage properties reported on at the extended 44th session

1. At its 14th extraordinary session (online, 2020), the World Heritage Committee decided that all items and sub-items that were foreseen for examination in 2020 and 2021 by its previous decisions, be examined at its extended 44th session in 2021 (Decision **14 EXT.COM 3**).
2. As a result, as part of the Reactive Monitoring process¹, the World Heritage Committee will examine at its extended 44th session the reports on the state of conservation of 255 World Heritage properties (Agenda items 7A and 7B), including the 53 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Agenda item 7A). In addition, due to specific situations, and as decided by the Committee during previous sessions, three general decisions, concerning the World Heritage properties of Iraq, the World Heritage properties of Syrian Arab Republic and the World Heritage properties of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will also be examined under Agenda item 7A.
3. The properties reported upon are selected, among all those inscribed on the World Heritage List, according to the following considerations:
 - 53 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Agenda item 7A) and for which reports have to be reviewed annually by the Committee, in conformity with Paragraph 190 of the *Operational Guidelines*);
 - 184 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);
 - 18 additional properties that have also come under threat since the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee in 2019 (Agenda item 7B);
 - For 11 properties out of these 255, a follow-up was requested by the World Heritage Committee upon their inscription on the World Heritage List.
4. The 255 properties for examination are distributed as follows:

Agenda item 7A	NAT	CLT	total
AFR	13	4	17
ARB	0	21	21
APA	2	4	6
EUR/NA	1	3	4
LAC	1	4	5
Total	17	36	53

Agenda item 7B	NAT	MIX	CLT	total
AFR	16	4	18	37
ARB	3	2	22	27
APA	20	2	35	58
EUR/NA	15	1	32	48
LAC	13	2	17	32
Total	67	11	124	202

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

5. These 255 properties represent 22.8% 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 represent 32% and 40% respectively 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.

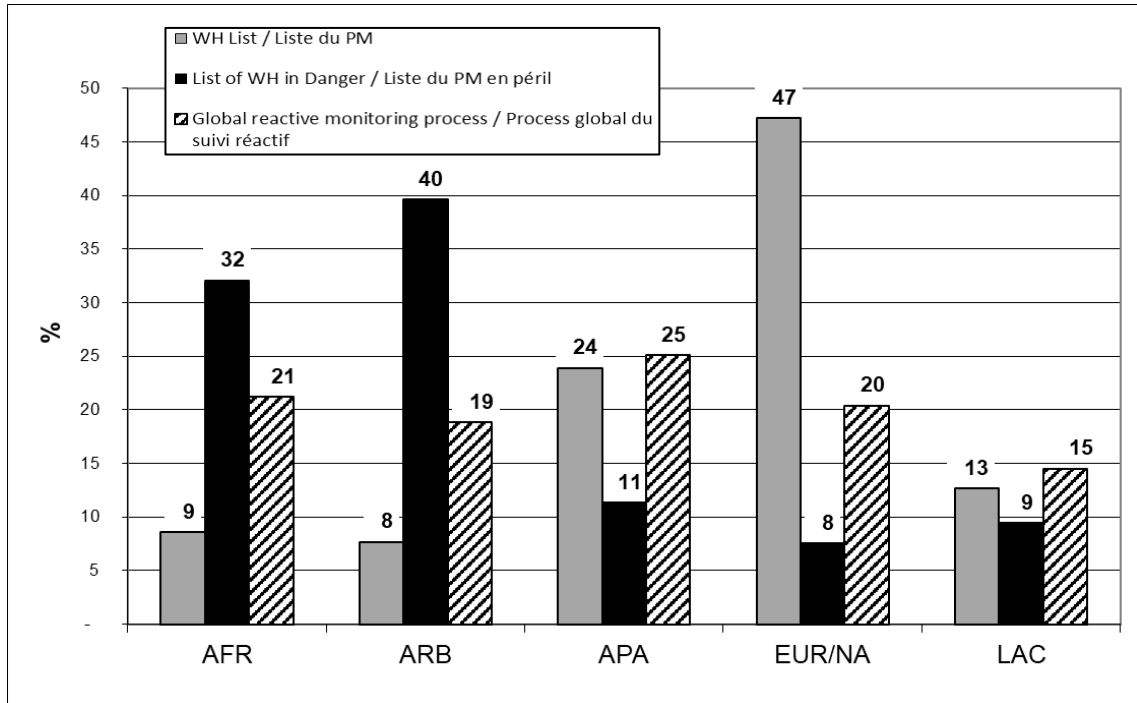


Chart 1: Percentage of properties located in each region

6. 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 32% of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and 33% of all properties subject to the Reactive Monitoring process this year (see Chart 2 below).

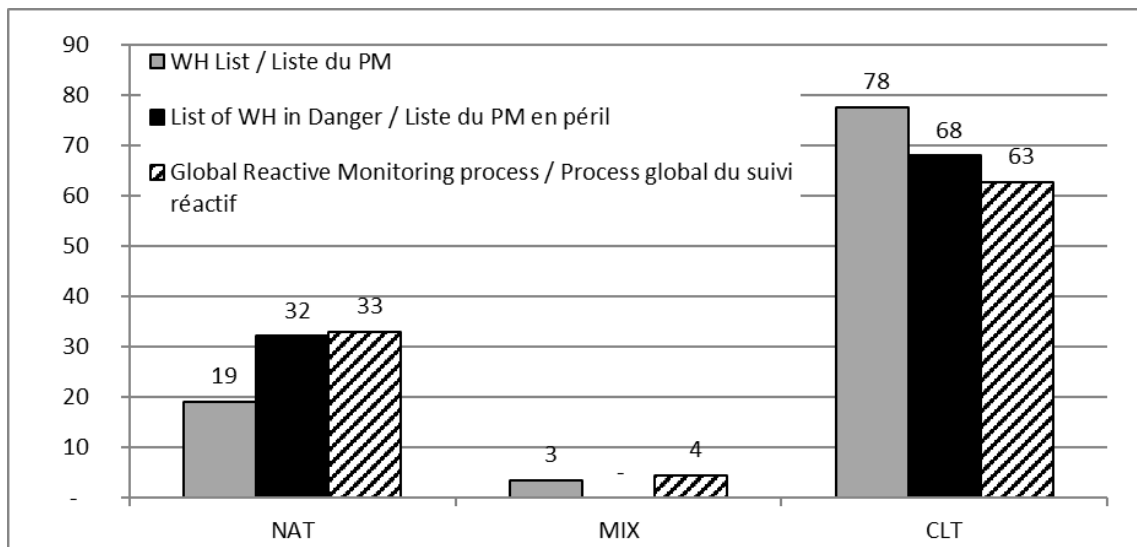


Chart 2: Percentage of properties of each category (natural, mixed, cultural)

B. Threats affecting the World Heritage properties reported on at the extended 44th session

7. The 255 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 (OUV). On average, 4 to 5 different factors affect each of these properties, which emphasizes once more the cumulative impact of threats on the OUV.
8. Globally, the most reported factors affecting the properties continue to be the following ones: Management systems/ management plan; Tourism-related activities; Housing; Impacts of transportation infrastructures; Illegal activities; Legal framework; War and Civil unrest; Mining, oil and gas exploitation/exploration as well as Climate change-related impacts.
9. However, factors affecting the World Heritage properties vary according to the category of heritage considered. The most reported factors affecting respectively natural and cultural properties, as identified in the state of conservation reports presented at the extended 44th session, as well as more detailed statistics, will be available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc> (click “Advanced search”; enter “from 2020”; click “Search”; then on the “Views” tab, and “Statistics”).
10. The following sections of the document present insights on specific factors, such as conflict situations, reconstruction, fire management, or urban pressure.

C. Information on the state of conservation reports submitted by States Parties

11. A substantial number of reports were not received within the statutory deadlines of 1 December 2019, 1 February 2020, 1 December 2020 or 1 February 2021, as requested by the World Heritage Committee. For example, by 15 December 2019, only 62% of the reports requested by this deadline had been received by the World Heritage Centre; and by 15 February 2020, 82% of the reports requested by this deadline had been received.
12. For this extended 44th session, and in spite of the exceptional conditions site managers had to operate under since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, 90% of all the reports requested by the World Heritage Committee were received by the end of February 2021 and 92% by the end of March 2021. It should however be noted with appreciation that this year again, most of the States Parties reports followed the statutory format included as Annex 13 of the *Operational Guidelines*. The respect of the format greatly improves the treatment of the information and facilitates the monitoring of the implementation of previous Committee decisions.
13. As an exceptional measure, as announced during the 14th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee (November 2021) - and strictly limited to the properties facing the most serious conservation issues for which a state of conservation report was initially planned for the 44th session in 2020 - States Parties concerned were given the possibility to provide the Secretariat with succinct updates on any significant changes to the property’ state of conservation since the submission of the last report, by no later than 1 February 2021.
14. It should be noted that delayed submission of the reports and/or late submission of additional information by the States Parties inevitably leads to less time available for dialogue between the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies on the issues at stake. This year, States Parties have submitted to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies a substantial amount of such additional documentation and information, sometimes at a very late point in the drafting process, which delays the production of the relevant working documents. Furthermore, late submissions lead to an increasing number of state of conservation (SOC) reports being included in the Addenda

documents, thus reducing the time available for Committee members to review these reports before the Committee session.

15. Although the sharing of information on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties is crucial, States Parties should be reminded about Decision **35 COM 12B**, Paragraph 16, by which they were requested by the Committee to consider **refraining from providing additional information regarding State of conservation issues after the deadlines** indicated in the *Operational Guidelines*, as this information cannot be reviewed in due course.
16. The World Heritage Centre would also like to acknowledge that out of all reports received, 75% have been made fully accessible to the public at http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/44com/documents/#state_of_conservation_reports with the agreement of the States Parties concerned. The online availability of such an important number of complete state of conservation reports greatly contributes to the transparency of the Reactive Monitoring process and States Parties should be commended for allowing such online publication.

D. Selection of the World Heritage properties to be proposed for discussion

17. In 2003, the World Heritage Committee requested (Decision **27 COM 7B.106.3**) that the state of conservation (SOC) reports should be presented to the Committee according to the two following categories:
 - Reports with recommended decisions which, in the judgment of the World Heritage Centre in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, require discussion by the World Heritage Committee,
 - Reports which, in the judgment of the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, can be noted without discussion.
18. Since the adoption of this decision, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies had been refining the selection process taking into account the procedures and statutory deadlines as set out in the *Operational Guidelines*, the different monitoring tools at the disposal of the World Heritage Committee and the ever growing number of properties to report on at each Committee session.
19. Since 2010, it was the usual practice that the following state of conservation reports be brought to the Committee's attention for discussion:
 - If deletion of the property from the World Heritage List is proposed,
 - If inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed,
 - If removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed,
 - If the property is subject to the Reinforced Monitoring mechanism,
 - If the property presents serious conservation issues of utmost urgency,
 - If significant new information regarding the property has been received after the report was issued, requiring a revision of the draft Decision.
20. This matter was also addressed by the experts tasked with the evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process (see Chapter I.C. of Document [WHC/19/43.COM/7](#)). During this evaluation, it turned out that the majority of persons interviewed acknowledged that there are many pragmatic reasons for limiting the number of reports for discussion during the Committee sessions and there appeared to be general satisfaction amongst those interviewed with the selection of SOC reports opened for discussion. The experts therefore made the recommendation (Recommendation 17) that the SOC reports presented to the Committee, "*including those "opened" for discussion, should be based*

on clear and objective criteria, including the level and urgency of the threat to the property, and also whether or not the site is on the Danger List, rather than being based on geographic representativeness.”

21. Considering the above, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies assessed the feasibility of having such “clear and objective criteria” and unanimously concluded that the selection of reports to be discussed by the Committee should continue to be guided by scientific criteria and by the urgency of the threats facing the property. As a result, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies agreed to only propose for discussion the following SOC reports:
 - If removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed,
 - If inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed,
 - If deletion of the property from the World Heritage List is proposed.
22. At its 43rd session (Baku, 2019), the Committee supported the outcomes of this reflection conducted by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, as well as the current practice allowing Committee members to add to this list the reports they wish to discuss (Decision **43 COM 7.1**).
23. **Therefore, the process for the selection of SOC reports for discussion at any given Committee session shall be as follows:**
 1. Four weeks prior to the opening of the Committee session, the list of the SOC reports proposed for discussion by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies (as per criteria detailed in paragraph 19 above) will be shared with all States Parties to the *Convention* (Document WHC/21/44.COM/INF.7);
 2. Sufficient time in advance of the Committee session, Committee members –and **only Committee members**²– may add to this list the reports they also wish to discuss, providing that, in line with Decision **43 COM 7.1**:
 - i) A written request is made to the Chairperson of the Committee, through the World Heritage Centre,
 - ii) The reason why the additional report needs to be opened for discussion is clearly indicated in the request;
 3. At least 10 days prior to the opening of the Committee session, the list of SOC reports to be discussed shall be closed and immediately made available to all States Parties (Document WHC/21/44.COM/INF.7 Rev);
 4. During the Committee session, the Chairperson shall directly give the floor to the Committee member, which requested a specific SOC report to be discussed, to explain the reason why it wished to discuss the report.

E. Fourth edition of the World Heritage Site Managers’ Forum

24. Key actors of the World Heritage system, site managers often emerge as the responsibility holders who oversee and lead site-specific managerial decision-making. The responsibility of implementing the decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee and preparing the required state of conservation reports also often rely on them. However, still too often, site managers are not directly involved in the decision-making processes and therefore might not be fully empowered to effectively implement the decisions adopted nor to assist other stakeholders to engage in World Heritage processes.

² Requests emanating from States Parties non-member of the Committee will not be taken into account.

25. To address this issue, Poland, as Host Country of the 41st session of the Committee (Krakow, 2017) organized the first World Heritage Site Managers' Forum (WHSMF), as a capacity-building exercise to achieve a more effective protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and to promote a greater engagement of those dealing with properties on a daily basis. This initiative was greatly appreciated and has been continued in 2018 and 2019 respectively by the Kingdom of Bahrain and Azerbaijan, in conjunction of the 42nd (Manama, 2018) and the 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions of the Committee. The outcomes of the three previous editions of the WHSMF can be found at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1394/> (2017), <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1435/> (2018) and <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1477/> (2019).
26. In this context, the People's Republic of China, as Host Country of the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, will host the 4th edition of the WHSMF, in partnership with the World Heritage Centre and the ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage Leadership Programme, exploring the theme of "**World Heritage governance – Being prepared to manage change and continuity**" to unite representatives from World Heritage properties with those at the heart of World Heritage procedures. Due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic situation, the 2021 WHSMF will take place in an online modality. It will be organized from 5 to 13 July 2021, with 3-hour daily sessions in order to facilitate the active participation of site managers of World Heritage properties from across the globe. A maximum of 100 participants will be selected for the 2021 WHSMF, taking into account that this event cannot take place in its usual *in presentia* format. More details on the 2021 WHSMF can be found at the following web address: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1586>.

I. STATUTORY MATTERS RELATED TO REACTIVE MONITORING

A. Evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process

Note: This Section should be read in conjunction with the final Evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process, available at the following web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>.

27. During the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), it was highlighted that the Reactive Monitoring process was perceived as a key indicator of the effectiveness of the Convention itself as an international agreement for heritage protection and that this process provided a unique global overview of the state of conservation of heritage. It was stressed however that its content and its procedures were not always clear. In addition, Committee members highlighted that the List of World Heritage in Danger is unfortunately often negatively perceived. The Committee decided that it was time that these issues be formally addressed (Decision **40 COM 7**).
28. To implement this decision, the World Heritage Centre conducted an evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process, thanks to the generous support of the State Party of Switzerland through the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). The process and methodology followed by the two senior experts consultants for this evaluation, as well as the major outcomes are detailed in Document [WHC/19/43.COM/7](#) (Chapter I.A).
29. The evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process included a prioritized set of recommendations to address the improvement of practices, for implementation by all stakeholders. The recommendations were sorted according to their level of priority (high, medium, low)
30. At its 43rd session (Baku, 2019), the Committee took note with appreciation of the evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process and, noting that the recommendations formulated in the evaluation referred to improvements of the current practices and did not call for structural changes nor amendments to the statutory documents, requested

all stakeholders of the Convention to take them on-board and implement them at their level as soon as possible (Decision **43 COM 7.1**).

31. The Committee also requested the World Heritage Centre to prioritize the implementation of the high priority recommendations, with an initial focus on those relevant to communication, capacity-building, including for site managers, and finance.
32. Subsequently, the two experts have provided a revised list of such prioritized recommendations (see page 148 of the evaluation report at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>), and the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, has prepared a matrix for implementation of those recommendations (Implementation Plan), following the revised list of priorities. The proposed matrix structure provides a clear framework for the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to report back to the Committee on the implementation of the priority recommendations, including their feasibility in relation to implementing actors, budgets, timeframes and overall status of implementation.
33. Noting that the evaluation presents recommendations without considering whether additional funding is required for their implementation, the matrix provides the opportunity to include an indicative estimate of whether the proposed activities can be absorbed under current financial operations or whether additional funding is required. Additionally, there will be an opportunity to directly link extra-budgetary needs to the Marketplace platform (available at the following web address: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/marketplace/>).
34. For each recommendation, this proposed matrix indicates:
 1. Target group(s) (e.g. States Parties, Site Managers, Committee members, World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies or Civil Society),
 2. Implementation authority(ies) (e.g. States Parties, Site Managers, Committee members, World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies or Civil Society),
 3. Deadline for implementation,
 4. Indicators to objectively track progress in implementation,
 5. Indicative extra-budgetary requirement,
 6. Available funding source,
 7. Status of implementation (this section will refer to the achievement of measurable outcomes).
35. The matrix proposed can be found at the following web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>
36. Finally, in line with Recommendation 34 of the evaluation, it is suggested that the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, report to the Committee on progress in the implementation of the recommendations at its 47th session.

B. Issues related to the List of World Heritage in Danger

B.1. Costed action plans and Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

37. As recalled in Decision **43 COM 8C.3**, the inscription of a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger aims to marshal international support to help the State Party concerned effectively address the challenges faced by the property, by developing a program of corrective measures to achieve a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) as provided for under Paragraph 183 of the Operational Guidelines.

38. It is important to note that the development of a DSOCR, and a programme for corrective measures, is a critical part of the procedure for managing and addressing threats to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of properties which are inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Paragraph 183, Operational Guidelines).
39. The successful achievement of the DSOCR to ensure the removal of a property from the List of World Heritage in Danger may be hindered by various issues such lack of financing and technical capacity, conflict situations (including armed conflicts and civil unrest) or a lack of available scientific baseline data on the OUV of the property (for example, biological inventories of key fauna species or clear articulation of the cultural attributes that contribute to OUV). Corrective measures to achieve the DSOCR needs to be to be quantified, as outlined in the 2013 Guidance on DSOCR.
40. Noting with concern that only 19 of the 53 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger have a DSOCR in place, the development of a DSOCR for the remaining 34 properties should be instigated as soon as practicable, recalling the Committee's request for "*the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to continue supporting States Parties in developing and submitting DSOCRs for all properties included in the List of World Heritage in Danger, by its 40th session in 2016 at the latest, and considers that properties should be retained on the List of World Heritage in Danger until the Desired state of conservation for removal is met*" (Decision **37 COM 7A.40**).
41. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have considered options and approaches for assisting States Parties in the development of costed action plans to achieve corrective measures for properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, as was requested by the Committee in its Decision **42 COM 7**. However, the conditions and the underlying reasons for inscription of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger vary greatly and in some cases, a costed action plan might not always be an appropriate or effective tool. Nonetheless, for many properties this approach might help mobilize the necessary resources and ensure that they are directed in the most effective way to address the issues that threaten the OUV of the property that is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
42. It is important to emphasize that the development of costed action plans remains the responsibility of States Parties, and while the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies remain ready to assist in this process, it is evident that existing Reactive Monitoring processes, such as Reactive monitoring missions, may not provide the optimal platform for such a process owing to their very specific scope, and that separate methodologies and guidelines apply.
43. In recent years, the Advisory Bodies have been involved in several activities piloting approaches for developing costed action plans. One example is the methodology prepared by IUCN using the results of the IUCN World Heritage Outlook assessments, which aims to develop costed action plans through participatory approaches and engagement of key stakeholders. This approach has been successfully piloted in two natural properties in France with the support of the State Party of France, however, remains to be trialled in a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. ICOMOS has recently collaborated with the State Party of Austria on the preparation of a draft DSCOR for the Historic Centre of Vienna, which is more directed at changes to statutory protection and management arrangements than at capital projects that would benefit from a costed action plan.
44. Within the Framework of the World Heritage Leadership Programme, IUCN and ICCROM have held discussions with the State Party of Australia which has expressed interest in supporting a workshop to discuss existing approaches and to pilot development of costed action plans in one or two properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

45. Noting these initial pilot activities and discussions, it is recommended that the Committee request the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to continue to explore these issues and call upon all interested States Parties to support a workshop to develop a common methodology and guidelines for when and how corrective measures might be supported by costed action plans that can be shared with all States Parties.

B.2. Properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger for over 10 years

46. At its 42nd session (Manama, 2018), the Committee highlighted that the Africa and the Arab States regions represented 28% and 41% respectively of all properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, although they only accounted for 9% and 8% of the World Heritage List respectively. A number of Committee members raised concerns about the fact that some properties have been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger for more than 10 years. They highlighted the need to consider such properties, and to analyse the processes that are in place to support necessary mitigation measures for such properties (such as missions, international assistance, availability or not of an adopted Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and/or costed action plans). The results of this analysis are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below).
47. At its 43rd session (Baku, 2019) (Decision **43 COM 8C.3**), the Committee recalled that the inscription of a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger aims to marshal international support to help the State Party effectively address the challenges faced by the property. Inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger also alerts the State Party about the international community's concern for the state of conservation of the property, provides a timely reminder of obligations that arise under the World Heritage Convention, highlights threats to the attributes of a property which contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and, importantly, initiates a process and pathway to address those threats including the availability of additional funding.

	Natural	Cultural	AFR	ARB	APA	EUR-NA	LAC	Total (%)
Number of properties currently inscribed on the Danger List:	17	36	16	21	6	4	6	53 (100%)
• 0-5 years	2	13	2	9	2	1	1	15 (28%)
• 6-10 years	6	13	5	7	2	2	3	19 (36%)
• 11-15 years	1	3	1	1	0	1	1	4 (7,5%)
• 16-20 years	0	5	0	3	2	0	0	5 (9%)
• 21-25 years	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	5 (9%)
• 26-30 years	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	3 (5,5%)
• 31-35 years	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1 (1,8%)
• > 35 years	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1 (1,8%)
With a DSOCR	9	10	6	2	4	2	5	19 (36%)
No DSOCR yet	8	26	10	19	2	2	1	34 (64%)
With missions	17	33	16	18	6	4	6	50 (95%)
No missions	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	3 (5%)
International Assist.	15	27	16	16	6	0	4	42 (79%)
No Int. Assist.	2	9	0	5	0	4	2	11 (21%)

Table 1: Statistics regarding properties currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

	Natural	Cultural	AFR	ARB	APA	EUR-NA	LAC	Total
Removed:	19	21	9	4	7	13*	7	40 (100%)
• Removed before 10 years	11	12	4	2	3	10*	4	23 (57,5%)
• Removed after 10 years	7	7	3	2	4	2	3	14 (35%)
• Removed after 20 years	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	3 (7,5%)
With missions	18	19	8	3	7	12	7	37 (92,5%)
No missions	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	3 (7,5%)
International Assist.	11	17	7	3	7	7	4	28 (70%)
No Int. Assist.	8	4	2	0	0	5	3	12 (30%)

Table 2: Statistics regarding properties which have been removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger (* one of these properties was **deleted** from the World Heritage List after 3 years on the List of World Heritage in Danger (the Dresden Elbe Valley – Germany)

Duration of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger

48. Of the 53 properties currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, 19 (i.e. 36%) have been inscribed for more than 10 years (Table 1, Chart 1). It is concerning that this represents more than a third of all properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. For the 40 properties previously inscribed and subsequently removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, statistics show that 42.5% remained inscribed for more than 10 years before being removed (Table 2), with a duration ranging from 2 to 24 years. Some properties have been inscribed twice on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and twice removed (e.g. Djoudj National Park in Senegal).
49. It should be noted that many of the properties that have remained on the List of World Heritage in Danger for more than 10 years are located in conflict/civil unrest situations or difficult political contexts.

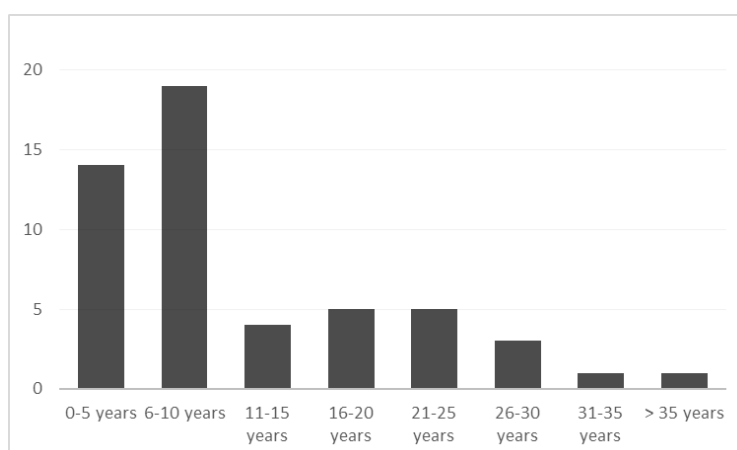


Chart 1: Duration of inscription of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger (in numbers)

50. Of the properties currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, 28% of cultural and 53% of natural properties have remained inscribed for more than 10 years (Chart 2).

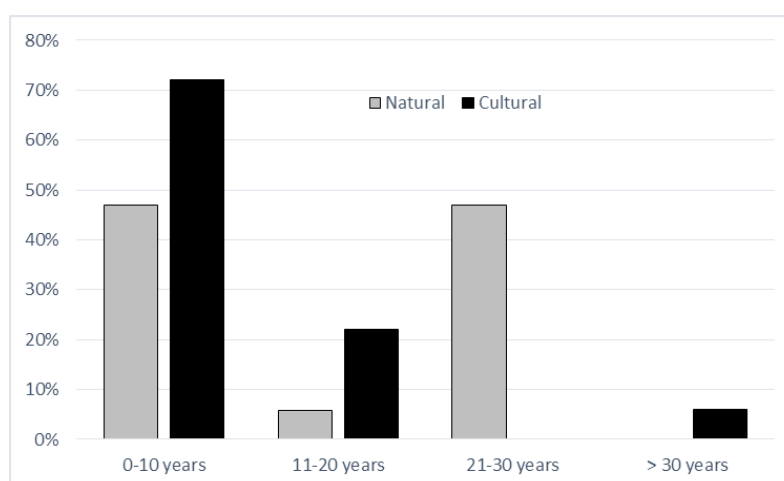


Chart 2: Duration of inscription of properties on the current List of World Heritage in Danger, per category of heritage (in percentages)

51. In the report of the 2019 evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>, paragraph 160), the evaluators stated that a general consensus from interviewees was that “adequate time must be given to allow

a State Party to undertake the measures necessary to ensure the property can be removed from the List [of World Heritage in Danger]".

Monitoring missions

52. Until June 2020, out of the 587 properties monitored through the Reactive Monitoring process of the World Heritage Convention ("SOC reports"), 68.5% had benefitted from at least one field mission. In comparison, 94% of the properties currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger had benefitted from such missions. This significant difference demonstrates the appropriate focus of attention on those properties facing the greatest level of threat, noting that the fundamental objective of such missions is to assess the state of the OUV of the property concerned and assist the State Party to formulate corrective measures, a suitable timeframe for their implementation, and since 2013, also help in the development of a DSOCR.
53. In some cases, where it was not possible to deploy missions, a close follow-up on the state of conservation of the properties was still made possible, in close consultation with the States Parties concerned, and regular reports made available to the Committee.

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

54. In 2013, the Committee "*consider[ed] that properties should be retained on the List of World Heritage in Danger until the Desired state of conservation for removal is met.*" (Decision **37 COM 7A.40**). This is an important principle: the removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger should reflect a satisfactory state of conservation and removal of threats to OUV, rather than being influenced by arbitrary timeframes or geographical considerations. Therefore, clear elaboration of the desired state of conservation through a DSOCR is a fundamental part of the process.
55. 19 properties currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger have a DSOCR adopted by the Committee, and 34 (64%) are still in the process of establishing one (Table 1). Given the critical importance of defining and then attaining the desired state of conservation of a property to allow it to be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, it is deeply concerning that almost two thirds of all properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger do not yet have a DSOCR. It is important to note that all properties removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger since 2013 have had a DSOCR in place.
56. The development of a DSOCR should take into account the nature of the threats affecting a property, as well as the feasibility of achieving such a DSOCR (e.g. in conflict or civil unrest situations - the most reported threat in the Arab States and Africa regions or when a biological census is required to establish baseline data for example in numerous African natural properties).

International Assistance

57. The above-mentioned Reactive Monitoring process evaluation (see paragraph 150 and Recommendation 38) highlighted that International Assistance "*will always be a very minor amount relative to funding required to address all the issues*" and that funds made available from the World Heritage Fund "*should be used in a catalytic manner, including through stimulating other sources of funding through fund raising and other related means*"
58. On average, the properties currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger have benefitted from around USD 70,000 per beneficiary property (ranging from USD 5,500 to USD 272,000) through the International Assistance of the World Heritage Fund. The properties that have been on the List of World Heritage in Danger for less than 10 years have been granted, on average, an amount of USD 40,000 per beneficiary property, while the properties that have been on this List for over 10 years, have

benefitted from around USD 90,000. This amount increases to over USD 100,000 if only considering properties on this List for over 20 years.

59. For the properties that have been removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, this average amount is around USD 70,000 per beneficiary property.

Conclusion

60. From the above-mentioned statistics, more than one third of properties currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and 42% of properties previously inscribed and subsequently removed, have been inscribed on the List for more than 10 years. This appears to support the premise that adequate time must be given to allow the States Parties concerned to undertake the necessary measures to protect the properties' OUV in manner that is sustainable in the long term. Notwithstanding the need to accommodate realistic timeframes it also reflects that a patient and concerted effort is required to address serious threats to OUV. Conversely, properties which have remained on the Danger List for much longer periods of time, some more than 30 years, suggest deeply entrenched problems which demand a more concentrated and sustained mobilization of international effort.
61. The fact that all properties removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger since 2013 have had a DSOCR in place emphasizes the pivotal role that a DSOCR, and the process to develop it, has in addressing serious threats to OUV. The Committee has also recognized the associated importance of costed action plans (Decisions **42 COM 7, 43 COM 7.1**).
62. The OUV of all properties currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, whether for less or more than 10 years, is being closely monitored by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies on a yearly basis (Reactive Monitoring process), or more often in some cases (Reinforced Monitoring mechanism). Properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger benefit from more frequent Reactive Monitoring missions than other properties and are also granted a greater proportion of funding through the International Assistance.
63. *An inclusive working mechanism for assessing the OUV of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger for more than 10 years*, as requested by the Committee, is therefore already in place as part of the larger Reactive Monitoring process, and it does not appear necessary to establish additional procedures or mechanisms to supplement existing ones. Nevertheless, it is evident that more focused, prioritized and sustained efforts are required to achieve the removal of properties, which have been on the List of World Heritage in Danger for 10 years or more. As noted above, International Assistance through the World Heritage Fund, whilst important, is insufficient to address entrenched problems and additional international expertise and resources need to be mobilized.

B.3. Improving the perception of the List of World Heritage in Danger

64. During the 40th session of the Committee (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), it was highlighted that the List of World Heritage in Danger was unfortunately often perceived as a sanction, and that, in many cases, States Parties were reluctant to expose the problems relating to properties within their national jurisdiction to what was seen to be unwelcome international scrutiny. Some States Parties question the value-add of being placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, arguing that in some cases it can be counter-productive. It was noted that inscription on this List was not perceived in the same way by all parties concerned; with some States Parties applying for the inscription of a property to focus international attention on its problems and to obtain expert assistance in solving them (e.g. Ecuador for the Galapagos; Albania for Butrint; United States of

America for Everglades National Park; or Colombia for Los Katios National Park, etc.), and others wishing to avoid such inscription by all means.

65. The Committee decided to formally address this issue in order to reverse any negative perception and highlight both the implications and the benefits of this fundamental mechanism of the World Heritage Convention. The World Heritage Committee hence called for a *“better understanding of the implications and benefits of properties being inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and to develop appropriate information material in this regard with a view to overcome the negative perceptions of the List of World Heritage in Danger”* (Decision **40 COM 7**).
66. The report of the 2019 evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring>, paragraphs 135, 137, 151), highlighted that when asked to rate the benefits of inscribing a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, 86% of survey respondents described the List of World Heritage in Danger as “beneficial” or “highly beneficial”; and 60% added that the inscription of a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger assisted in avoiding loss of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). They also noted that the List of World Heritage in Danger had played an important role in mobilizing resources for properties from external donors and that this had made a significant contribution to addressing conservation issues in properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In addition, Annex F of the above-mentioned evaluation report also provides a short outline of natural and cultural property case studies to illustrate positive examples where the inscription of a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger has led to significant conservation action, as well as examples where States Parties themselves have requested that a property within their jurisdiction be included on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
67. Inscribing a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger alerts the international community to the situation in the hope that it can join efforts to save the endangered properties. The listing of a property as World Heritage in Danger therefore aims to allow the conservation community to respond to specific preservation needs in a concerted and effective manner.
68. In circumstances where the Committee signals its intention to inscribe a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the response of some States Parties is to deploy additional resources, and/or to make or to reverse decisions that affect the OUV of the property. In such cases, it is the ‘potential’ for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger that may itself be an effective incentive and conservation mechanism, by highlighting the seriousness of ascertained and potential dangers to senior State Party officials, agencies and stakeholders.
69. Negative perception of the List of World Heritage in Danger can hamper the proper implementation of the World Heritage Convention and of the recommendations made on scientific assessment by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre. This, in turn, also has a negative impact on the state of conservation of the properties these decisions are intended to protect.
70. To address these issues, the World Heritage Centre has developed a project with the objective to conduct an overall reflection and study on the image/perception of the List of World Heritage in Danger. A Contractor with expertise in strategic marketing, branding and communication has been identified and tasked with investigating the reasons why a negative perception overshadows the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as suggesting ways forward to change the mindset towards the List of World Heritage in Danger into a more positive perception. The methodology for the study will include data and information gathering through a desk review of statutory texts, working and information documents, webpages and Committee’ decisions as well as prior studies on the topic. The Contractor will also undertake interviews with the Secretariat, the Advisory Bodies, State Party representatives, Committee members and experts, as needed,

ensuring as far as possible that the interviewees form a geographically and gender balanced group, also representing all categories of properties (cultural/natural). An online survey addressed to all stakeholders of the Convention will also be conducted.

71. The World Heritage Centre has successfully obtained the generous support of the State Party of the Norway for this activity (see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/partners/381/>).
72. One of the expected outputs of the study will be a set of recommendations, aimed at various stakeholders of the World Heritage Convention, to help overcome the current negative perception of the List of World Heritage in Danger.
73. The results of this study will be presented to the World Heritage Committee during its 45th session.

B.4. 'HeRe' workshop

74. As indicated in Document [WHC/19/43.COM/7](#), in line with Decision **40 COM 7**, the State Party of Romania organized, through the UNESCO Participation Programme, an "International meeting of World Heritage in Danger stakeholders" (23-25 September 2019, Bucharest, Romania), as part of its "HeRe – Heritage Revivals – Heritage for Peace" initiative. The general framework of the HeRe meeting was defined by the World Heritage Convention, together with the 1954 Convention (and its 1999 second Protocol) on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Indeed, some World Heritage properties facing dangers are also benefitting from the Enhanced Protection status, and in several cases, conflicts have led to looting of archaeological World Heritage properties, for example.
75. This HeRe meeting brought together participants from UNESCO (World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Section for Movable Heritage and Museums) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime UNODC) and participants from 18 countries (including States Parties representatives, NGOs, universities and mass-media, from Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Egypt, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Lithuania, Nigeria, Romania, Serbia, Uganda, United States of America). It provided a unique space for discussions and networking of professionals regarding the preservation of cultural and natural heritage facing dangers.
76. The factors negatively affecting World Heritage properties are diverse and UNESCO has efficient instruments to draw attention on those and to encourage corrective and collective actions. One such instrument is the List of World Heritage in Danger. The HeRe meeting gathered a community of professionals to share their experience on preserving and/or restoring the threatened Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of their World Heritage properties, either inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, or removed from this List; hence highlighting once more the benefits of the inscription of a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger..
77. A number of case studies were presented during the meeting; some of which are detailed in the outcome magazine published by the National Commission of Romanian for UNESCO. Articles also include *inter alia* insights on engaging civil society to safeguard cultural heritage in countries experiencing conflict, on the links between a country's international status and the protection of heritage sites in times of conflict, as well as how to communicate on the effects of climate change on World Heritage properties. (see https://www.cnr-unesco.ro/uploads/media/revista_HERE_eng.pdf (in Romanian and English only).
78. In addition, the National Commission of Romanian for UNESCO released a video summarizing the highlights of the HeRe meeting (also see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hI_AepyyEq&feature=youtu.be).

II. CONSERVATION ISSUES

A. Emergency situations resulting from conflicts

79. Conflict (including armed conflict and civil unrest) continues to represent a major threat to World Heritage properties. It remains one of the major reasons why properties have been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Half of the 53 properties currently inscribed on that List were included because of the potential or ascertained danger of impacts of conflicts, and conflict situations have arisen subsequently for some of the other properties on that List. With the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the vulnerability of such cultural and natural heritage to inadequate safeguarding measures has become even more concerning.
80. Several countries in the Arab States and Africa regions continue to be affected by armed conflict and instability, severely impacting the cultural and natural heritage in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger, including both World Heritage properties and sites inscribed on Tentative Lists. In some cases, such as Palmyra, the property itself has been subject to direct attacks.
81. The large-scale damage of sites and urban areas, such as in the Ancient City of Aleppo (Syria), the Old City of Mosul (Iraq) and the Old City of Sana'a (Yemen), continues to raise the stakes of post-conflict cultural heritage recovery, amidst the urgency of providing basic adequate services for inhabitants.
82. In Yemen, around 80% of the population is in need of humanitarian aid and protection as a result of the ongoing conflict, which has, in some areas, resulted in large-scale destruction of housing precincts. Natural hazards, such as cyclones and floods have exacerbated the situation, threatening the country's cultural and natural heritage, including its World Heritage properties and sites on the Tentative List. Several projects have been carried out in Yemen with the aim of addressing the safeguarding of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. These include a number of emergency interventions that have been supported by the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF), established in 2015, in addition to the three-year EU-funded project "Cash for Work: Promoting livelihood opportunities for Urban Youth in Yemen" (USD 12 million).
83. In Libya, the instability which raised concerns about the protection of properties is slowly receding. Several safeguarding efforts were undertaken by the State Party, which has now embarked on developing corrective measures and a definition of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of some properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger. In Iraq, accessibility to some of the sites and the limited resources for further protection and emergency consolidation actions have continued as prevailing challenges, while in Syria, some sites remain inaccessible, so their condition is unknown and there is no effective means of extending support or commencing remedial action.
84. In the Africa Region, several natural and mixed World Heritage properties continue to be affected by the direct and indirect impacts of civil conflict and war. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic, the security situation is improving gradually, allowing for a significant increase in patrol coverage by the respective park staff in several natural properties. Nevertheless, the situation is deteriorating further in many countries including Mali, Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso with the presence of armed groups involved in illegal resource extraction activities such as wildlife poaching, illegal logging, the trafficking of wildlife products and illegal mining. Insecurity in Burkina Faso has also led to the presence of armed groups within the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger), resulting in the evacuation of management staff from the W and Arly components located in Burkina Faso, and a subsequent absence of management in these components. The situation also remains tragic in Virunga National Park in the DRC where, since the previous session of the

Committee, at least twenty park staff have been killed. The Virunga National Park personnel have continued to protect local populations and secure areas dedicated to the conservation of outstanding biodiversity. In order to ensure the continuity of conservation actions, emergency support was provided through the [Rapid Response Facility \(RRF\)](#), aimed at increasing the protection of guards and staff as well as delivering support to the impacted communities.

85. While poaching and illegal logging is often closely linked to conflict and the presence of armed groups, it is also on the rise in countries that are not directly affected by armed conflict. Given their extremely lucrative nature, organized crime and criminal groups are increasingly involved in these activities. Further efforts are needed to contain these illegal wildlife trade and illegal timber trade syndicates, including through cooperation with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
86. With regard to cultural heritage, the impact of armed conflict and the presence of armed groups in West Africa, notably in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria, continue to pose persistent threats, seriously challenging the management capacities of the States Parties. Moreover, the security situation resulting from inter-community conflicts in and around the Cliffs of Bandiagara (Mali), not only threaten cultural heritage in all its forms, including through the illicit trafficking of cultural objects, but also brings great suffering to all aspects of the communities daily life, often to the point of forcing people to abandon their homes. Despite the commendable efforts of the State Party of Mali, an urgent evaluation mission conducted in July 2019, with support from the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF), concluded that the property of Bandiagara was increasingly under threat due to the worsening security situation, and called for urgent and efficient implementation of actions in support of the property and its inhabitants.
87. UNESCO is also partnering with the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) Foundation with a view to strengthening the protection of certain World Heritage properties, including the Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam (Afghanistan), the Cliff of Bandiagara, Land of the Dogons (Mali) and the Tomb of Askia (Mali).
88. In Ethiopia, the Aksum World Heritage property and the Sacred Landscapes of Tigray, inscribed on the Tentative List are situated in the Tigray region where conflict has been ongoing. The UNESCO Culture Sector is monitoring the situation on the ground in close consultation with the UNESCO Field Office in Addis Ababa and the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritages (ARCCH) of Ethiopia. In order to address urgent needs to ensure the safeguarding of heritage, the Sector is engaged in undertaking an emergency response to enhance protective measures within the site.
89. On 30 March 2021, Mali and UNESCO received symbolic reparation on behalf of international community for the destruction of Timbuktu's mausoleums. This gesture, provided by the Trust Funds for Victims, followed the International Criminal Court's (ICC) decision on the responsibility to condemn in the deliberate destruction of several cultural properties in the Timbuktu World Heritage property.
90. In terms of the vulnerability of sites to potential looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects, UNESCO, notably through the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the 1970 Convention and the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols, continues to pursue its follow-up to the implementation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions related to cultural heritage protection, humanitarian, and security considerations, in particular Resolutions 2199, 2253 and 2347.
91. Despite the challenges, States Parties have participated in the third cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Arab States region, which is very important for establishing an Action Plan for the coming six years. In addition, the Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and the

related corrective measures are being elaborated for a number of properties and an approach was established by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies about ways in which the DSOCR process may be initiated, in cases where the security situation currently prevents a Reactive Monitoring mission.

92. Following the launch of the Initiative “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” in February 2018, UNESCO pursued its actions towards the rehabilitation and recovery of Iraq’s cultural heritage, notably in the Old City of Mosul, an update of which is available in Document WHC/21/44.COM/7A. UNESCO has recently signed an agreement with ICCROM to build capacity of local Iraqi professionals and craftsmen through this project.
93. The HEF has provided support to Member States in protecting natural and cultural heritage from disasters and conflicts by more effectively preparing for and responding to emergency situations. The Fund is supported by the Qatar Fund for Development, Norway, Canada, ANA Holdings INC., Monaco, the Netherlands, Estonia, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Andorra and Serbia. Since the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Baku, 2019), the HEF supported emergency interventions concerning World Heritage properties affected by conflicts in Iraq, Yemen, Mali, and Sudan. The activities in Sudan in 2019 concerned the Development of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans for the Sudanese National Museum and the Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe and the Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region World Heritage properties.

B. Recovery and Reconstruction

94. In its Decision **42 COM 7**, the World Heritage Committee welcomed the Warsaw Recommendation on the Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage (2018) and requested the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to disseminate it broadly. An Arabic version of the Recommendation was produced through the cooperation of the Polish Delegation with ICCROM (see <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1826>). Following Decision **43 COM 7**, which requested the World Heritage Centre to continue the reflection on reconstruction, a number of activities took place.
95. To provide all stakeholders concerned with the necessary background and to enable informed decision-making on recovery and reconstruction in the World Heritage context, a dedicated web-page has been developed by the World Heritage Centre (see <https://whc.unesco.org/en/reconstruction/>).
96. Further to the international expert meeting on the recovery and reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas (Tokyo, Japan 2017), the proceedings and results will be co-published by UNESCO as *The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues*.
97. A *Technical Meeting on the Recovery of the World Heritage Site of Palmyra* was organized by the World Heritage Centre in December 2019 with the aim of reflecting on and discussing reconstruction and recovery at the property. The meeting concluded with a set of recommendations (see <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2133>). Another meeting on Palmyra was held by the Russian Federation on 2 December 2020 at the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, including an online panel discussion and on-site exhibition.
98. The Warsaw Recommendation, the UNESCO-World Bank document *Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery* (CURE) <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265981>, and the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) were used also for the reflections and debates on the recovery of the city of Beirut, especially the online debate *Bridging the Past and Future through Built Heritage* hosted by UNESCO ResiliArt on 24 September 2020. It brought together experts and actors in the field of built heritage to discuss the impact of the 4 August 2020 blast on the architectural and urban heritage of Beirut, and the way forward towards a comprehensive approach to urban recovery that integrates cultural heritage protection and people-centred policies. This debate is

shared online and is accessible at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUEgfx61Skc&feature=youtu.be>.

99. UNESCO's *Li Beirut Initiative* for the historic neighbourhoods in Beirut devastated by the August 2020 explosions aims to integrate urban heritage values and modern heritage attributes with urban development plans and processes for urban reconstruction. This activity, supported by the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), is informed by the HUL Recommendation approach, which integrates urban heritage management with urban planning. Using a similar approach and supported by UNESCO's *Li Beirut Initiative* and the Government of France, the Order of Engineers and Architects of Beirut and the Faculties of Architecture in Lebanon have developed the *Beirut Urban Declaration* as a national vision for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the historic neighbourhoods.
100. In 2020, ICOMOS also published a special issue of the international Journal of Cultural Property on the theme of *Authenticity and Reconstruction*. The volume was guest-edited by Cornelius Holtorf and contains 6 peer reviewed papers. (<https://www.icomos.org/en/focus/reconstruction/80268-outcomes-icomos-university-forum-published-in-the-ijcp>).
101. The Warsaw Recommendation also served as a reference during the online webinar *The invincible city. Society in cultural heritage recovery* organized on 21 October 2020 by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland, the National Institute of Cultural Heritage of Poland, the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the reconstruction of Warsaw and the 40th anniversary of its inscription on the World Heritage List. This demonstrates that the Warsaw Recommendation constitutes a set of principles concerning the process of urban reconstruction and reconstruction of historic buildings or complexes of buildings destroyed as a result of conflicts or disasters which can be used beyond the World Heritage context (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1549>). The event brought together more than 400 participants and experts. It focused on international experiences in the rehabilitation and revival of historical cities destroyed during 20th-century wars and contemplated contemporary challenges faced by heritage under threat. It was also an expression of solidarity with the cities whose heritage has been devastated as a result of conflicts and disasters.
102. On 21 December 2020, ARC-WH organized a webinar on *Cultural heritage and people - building resilience in the superimposed trauma* (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmHbd3pfSF0>) in preparation for the March 2021 *Conference on integrated post-disaster reconstruction of cultural heritage – social, economic and psychological aspects of recovery*. Reiterating that the reconstruction of the heritage sites in social trauma afterlife is the most radical method of conservation, which is acceptable only in exceptional cases, the webinar addressed the issues of the reconstruction of Cultural Heritage and Post-Trauma Recovery in the COVID-19 contexts. The focus of the meeting was on World Heritage properties affected by more than one devastating event superimposed over each other, combined with the global economic recession, limited physical communications and extreme health precautions. The meeting intended to set up standards for efficient, sound and sustainable recovery project management and re-structuring of funding and capacities for heritage in general with an aim to contribute to the evolving approaches of the World Heritage Centre, its partners and Advisory Bodies. The Secretariat took part in the webinar to present strategies and projects undertaken to respond to recovery challenges and reconstruction. Key recovery and reconstruction concepts and priorities were considered in light of the circumstances triggered by the pandemic. These included: participative and integrative reconstruction; reviving intangible heritage and social interactions through reconstruction and recovery of monuments; building the resilience of people and heritage; and the potential of the dynamic relationship between youth and heritage.

103. Following the 25 December 2020 partial collapse of the House of Wonders in the Stone Town of Zanzibar World Heritage property, the State Party of Oman dispatched an expert mission to assist the State Party to stabilize the still-standing portion of the building. This was followed by two missions, invited to the property by the State Party of the United Republic of Tanzania and coordinated by the Africa Unit of the World Heritage Centre, to assist in recovery and stabilization of the remainder of the building. The first, undertaken by the University of Cape Town-affiliated Zamani Project, was afforded through Emergency Assistance and created high-fidelity digital scans of the building, augmenting pre-existing scans. Further structural analysis was undertaken by a World Monuments Fund-funded mission, who also provided expertise. These now form the basis for further discussions on the rehabilitation, possibly through reconstruction, of the House of Wonders. The State Party of Oman has already committed funds to such a rehabilitation. Discussions are ongoing between the State Party of the United Republic of Tanzania, the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM.
104. ICCROM and ICOMOS completed the joint project *Analysis of Case Studies on Recovery and Reconstruction*, which is based on a compilation of 11 case studies. The project sought to harness the knowledge and capacities of both bodies to explore how best to learn from experience and improve guidance. The final report was published in two volumes in March 2021 (<https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2447/>). The case studies follow the framework of the [ICOMOS Matrix for the Compilation of Case Studies](#). This valuable tool provides a solid structure for in-depth analysis and a well-founded basis for the contrast and comparison of diverse experiences. The final report also highlights cross-cutting issues in post-trauma recovery and reconstruction, including the engagement of local populations; the need for continuous and ongoing responses; the sustainability of measures and relationships and lasting impacts; and the ownership of outcomes.
105. The *International Conference on Integrated Reconstruction and Post-Trauma Impact on Communities and Socio-Economic Aspects of Recovery*, initially planned to be organized by the ARC-WH in Manama (Bahrain) in April 2020, was postponed to March 2021. The Conference, which took the form of webinars, aimed to contribute to a wider debate on post-disaster reconstruction focusing on socio-economic and other impacts on local communities. It brought a perspective of post-disaster reconstruction and recovery which will influence further development of existing or new international policies and actions to be shared at the time of the session of the World Heritage Committee in 2021.
106. Implementation of The *Revive the Spirit of Mosul* initiative, which aims to use culture and education as drivers and catalysts for recovery and reconstruction of the Old City of Mosul (included on the State Party's Tentative List in 2018), continued in partnership with Iraq authorities, with funding for the on-going culture-related activities from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the European Union, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania. The initiative is another ambitious UNESCO reconstruction campaign, with the view to rebuilding the iconic Al-Nouri Mosque and its Al-Hadba Minaret, as well as repairing the monumental Al-Sa'aa Church, the Al Tahira Church, the Aghawat Mosque, and numerous historic residential houses and their urban fabric. As part of the UAE-funded project *Reviving the Spirit of Mosul by Rebuilding Its Historic Landmarks*, the first phase of the project at the Al-Nouri Mosque Complex and the Al-Hadba Minaret, which consisted of assessment, securing the site, removing the surrounding debris, collecting historical fragments and stabilizing the remaining structures, was completed in the spring of 2020. In November 2020, an international architectural competition to select the design for the Al Nouri Mosque and its adjacent buildings was launched. The winning design was selected in April 2021. With regards to the rehabilitation of the two churches, rubble removal and securing the site is completed for both Al-Tahera and Al-Saa'a churches. Damage assessment and technical documentation for restoration and

rehabilitation of these two churches are on-going and planned to be finalised by early autumn 2021 (see item 9 in Document WHC/21/44.COM/7A for further details).

107. As for the EU-funded project *Reviving Mosul and Basra Old Cities*, 43 historical houses were de-mined and selected for rehabilitation following engagement with all levels of concerned national and local government entities and relevant stakeholders. The rehabilitation of these houses and the surrounding infrastructure started in December 2020 and planned to be completed in October 2021. Heritage-sensitive removal of rubble and clearance of explosive hazards at the sites is also completed for another 75 houses, whose rehabilitation will start in early July 2021.

C. Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)

108. As the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020 came to an end, 2020 marked the end of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which included 20 time-bound, measurable, global targets, the so-called “Aichi Biodiversity Targets” (<https://www.cbd.int/sp/>). Several of the indicators of the Aichi Targets have also been included as indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 (Life below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).
109. The first Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (<https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>), released at the 7th session of Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) at UNESCO Headquarters in May 2019, shows that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history — and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating. Despite progress to implement policies in support of nature conservation, the report concludes that global goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories and that only four of the 20 Aichi Targets show good progress. The report demonstrates that current trends in biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystems will undermine progress towards 80% of the SDGs assessed targets, related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land. It also concludes that loss of biodiversity is not only an environmental issue, but also a developmental, economic, security, social and moral issue with far-reaching and unprecedented impacts on human wellbeing. Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 (GBO-5), published by the CBD in September 2020, also confirmed that none of the 20 Aichi Targets have been fully achieved (<https://www.cbd.int/gbo5>).
110. Transformative change will be needed to achieve the CBD Vision of "Living in Harmony with Nature" where "[b]y 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people." The IPBES report and GBO-5 provide clear guidance on how such change will need to be accomplished and the forthcoming UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15) in Kunming (China, October 2021), will adopt a new strategic framework on biodiversity conservation for the next decade, the so-called Post-2020 GBF, which is expected to provide an overall global policy framework for all the biodiversity-related conventions, including the World Heritage Convention.
111. In this regard, members of the Biodiversity-related conventions Liaison Group (BLG), including the World Heritage Convention, made a number of joint statements during key biodiversity events including the UN Summit on Biodiversity on 30 September 2020. By its Decision **43 COM 5A** (Baku, 2019), the Committee had also called on all States Parties to the Convention to actively engage in the preparation of the post-2020 GBF. The contribution of the World Heritage Convention to achieving the global biodiversity agenda is also highlighted in the World Heritage Review No. 96 published in December 2020 (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/review/96/>).
112. The post-2020 GBF also recognises the profound connections between protecting biodiversity and combatting human-induced climate change. In this sense, the actions

defined within the 2015 Paris Agreement must, in parallel, be genuinely addressed by the global community in order to achieve the aspirations of the post-2020 GBF. The World Heritage Convention has the comparative advantage of being the custodian of some of the largest intact ecosystems on earth, which are essential in the fight against climate change (also see Document WHC/21/44.COM/7C).

113. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN are actively engaged in the development of the new GBF in various capacities including preparatory processes, workshops and policy submissions. IUCN continues to provide input into the global process, scope and content through resources available at <https://www.iucn.org/theme/global-policy/our-work/convention-biological-diversity-cbd/post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework>. The IUCN Programme 2021-2024 is strongly framed around the global biodiversity agenda and is proposed for the first time to be harmonized with the decadal timelines of the GBF. In addition, the World Heritage Centre has provided further inputs into the process via the joint submissions of UNESCO Sectors. In particular, the World Heritage Centre suggested that a specific target be included on strengthening links between nature, people and culture, using UNESCO designated sites to support the development of capacities for the implementation of the GBF, and proposed to strengthen further the language on the proposed Target on protected sites (see UNESCO's submission on <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020/submissions/2019-108>).
114. The forthcoming IUCN World Conservation Congress, now scheduled for September 2021, is expected to be an important milestone in this process. The Congress will place a dedicated focus on post-2020 with various events engaging the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, States Parties and other World Heritage partners in shaping the contribution that World Heritage can make to achieve the CBD 2050 vision.
115. The World Heritage Centre, IUCN and members of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee participated in the Consultation Workshop of biodiversity-related conventions on the post-2020 GBF (Bern I) in June 2019, hosted by the Government of Switzerland. The report is available at <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020/brc-ws>.
116. From 14 to 18 November 2019, an International Expert Workshop "*Harnessing the power of World Heritage for a better future: World Heritage and the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework*" was organized jointly by IUCN, the World Heritage Centre and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). After stressing the key contribution of the Convention to global biodiversity conservation, international cooperation, peace and the quality of life on earth and how the Convention promotes a holistic approach to biodiversity conservation that embraces the indivisible connections between people, culture and nature, the meeting issued a statement on World Heritage and the post-2020 GBF, with concrete recommendations on how the Convention can be reflected in the new GBF (<http://whc.unesco.org/document/179982>). It was officially submitted by the World Heritage Centre to CBD Secretariat in December 2019, as an input into the GBF preparatory process. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN has also actively promoted the statement throughout their networks and at key preparatory events centered on the GBF.
117. The World Heritage Centre, IUCN ICOMOS and ICCROM recognize that in strengthening links between nature, people and culture in relation to World Heritage properties and in the context of implementation of the GBF, it could be especially relevant to consider mixed properties, cultural landscapes and other relevant cultural properties. In this context, one welcome entry point will be the proposed renewal of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity. A recommendation was adopted by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity at its 11th meeting in November 2019: <https://www.cbd.int/recommendation/icnp/?id=13731>.

118. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN also attended the thematic workshop on area-based conservation measures, which took place in Montréal, Canada from 1-3 December 2019 and the 2nd meeting on the Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 GBF, held at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy from 24-29 February 2020.
119. IUCN has established a dedicated initiative focused on exploring the indivisible links between nature and culture, which are both central to the objectives of World Heritage and essential to underpin efforts to conserve biodiversity through the mechanisms of transformative change noted above. IUCN is working closely with the World Heritage Centre, ICCROM, ICOMOS and the CBD Secretariat to build a culture of synergy between the BLG members aimed at realizing the aspiration of common but differentiated responsibility for implementing the post-2020 GBF.
120. A follow-up workshop to the Bern consultation workshop was held online from 18 January to 2 February 2021 (Bern II), organized by UNEP and hosted by the Government of Switzerland. The World Heritage Convention was represented by 4 members of the Bureau of its Committee as well as by the World Heritage Centre and one Advisory Body, IUCN (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2252>). An agreed World Heritage statement was delivered by one of the participating members of the Bureau. A position paper from the World Heritage Convention was also submitted, including the recommendations from the Vilm workshop and proposed amendments to the updated zero draft of the post-2020 GBF. Key contributions of the World Heritage Convention to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems at global, national and site levels were highlighted. To make the new GBF truly overarching and relevant, the importance of addressing the mandates of the biodiversity conventions was stressed, requiring in practice that National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) integrate the objectives of all the conventions and that structures of cooperation among national focal points of different conventions are strengthened. The background documents and the workshop report are available at <https://www.unep.org/events/workshop/bern-ii-consultation-workshop-biodiversity-related-conventions-post-2020-global>.
121. Many of the recommendations are relevant to World Heritage, but the outcomes of this meeting require more specific elaboration to ensure that the general wish for synergies between conventions is translated into effective and focused action. In this regard, one particular area of focus that should be noted by the Committee and all States Parties to the Convention, is the focus needed on national level implementation. This is given effect through the development of NBSAPs, and it will be crucial that the new generation of NBSAPs that will implement the new post-2020 GBF fully take into account the substantive priorities for World Heritage in each country, but also are prepared with involvement of the focal points for World Heritage in the process. The specific role of the World Heritage Convention in supporting transboundary and transnational conservation efforts, including through serial sites, should also be noted a particular focus in implementing the new GBF.
122. After the adoption of the post-2020 GBF, securing funding for its operationalisation will be a major global task. The Secretariat of the CBD has therefore reminded that in accordance with the CBD COP Decision XIII/21, the governing bodies of the various biodiversity-related conventions have the possibility of providing strategic guidance for the eighth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund (2022-2026) for consideration by the CBD COP 15. The World Heritage Centre therefore recommends that the Committee invite the CBD COP to consider the important contributions that the World Heritage Convention makes on biodiversity conservation and to take this into account in formulating its guidance to GEF and other international finance mechanisms to support the post-2020 GBF. The GEF already provides an important funding source to many States Parties in addressing conservation priorities at World Heritage properties, or sites on Tentative Lists. The World Heritage Centre and the UNDP-implemented GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) have also led the joint

Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation (COMPACT) programme (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/compact/>) since 2000, with the support of IUCN and other partners. The programme supports sustainable development and engagement of local communities in conservation of World Heritage properties. A Memorandum of Cooperation between UNDP GEF-SGP, the CBD Secretariat and the World Heritage Centre is currently under revision.

123. With the adoption of the post-2020 GBF, new opportunities emerge in further strengthening the alignment of the GEF funding with the World Heritage Convention priorities both at the strategic and site-levels. The 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in 2022 can also provide new opportunities to reflect on the Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2012-2022 and the alignment of the Convention's future strategy with the GBF.

D. Buffer zones

124. A buffer zone is often defined as a transition area, which in itself does not have Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), but which supports the OUV of a property. It is managed for the way it contributes to the value, understanding and sustainable development of the property, rather than just for its own values. The concept of buffer zones for natural areas came to prominence in 1974 as a result of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, where buffer zones were identified as a key component in protecting biodiversity.
125. The Operational Guidelines define a buffer zone as “an area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the property.” (Paragraph 104). They strongly recommend the inclusion of a buffer zone into the nomination of a site to the World Heritage List. If no buffer zone is proposed, then the nomination must provide an explanation as to why one is not required. Paragraphs 103-107 of the Operational Guidelines deal principally with buffer zones, however, other paragraphs are also pertinent to this issue, including paragraphs 99 – 102 covering guidance on boundaries for effective protection and paragraphs 87 – 95, which deal with integrity considerations and infer the context for the scale and requirements for buffer zones for properties inscribed under various criteria.
126. In 2008, an international expert meeting on “World Heritage and Buffer Zones” (11-14 March 2008, Davos, Switzerland) (see <https://whc.unesco.org/en/events/473/>) identified the need for greater clarity on the relationship between World Heritage properties and their buffer zones, noting that “buffer zones [also] provide an important mechanism to share the benefits of World Heritage designation with local communities and stakeholders and enhance sustainable use”. The meeting also recognized that although every property needs protection and management arrangements, there may be mechanisms other than a formal buffer zone that can achieve similar protection, for example through other legal or regulatory methods. The meeting went on to recommend steps to consider in the process of establishing a buffer zone and standards to be considered by the World Heritage Committee in relation to the establishment of buffer zones. The expert meeting made a number of specific recommendations to amend the Operational Guidelines, and the Committee, in its Decision **32 COM 7.1**, requested the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to prepare draft revisions to the Operational Guidelines, taking account of the Committee's debate on the results of this international expert meeting, with particular emphasis on developing a lexicon of terms.

127. Of the currently 1,121 properties on the World Heritage List, only slightly more than 60%³ have formalized buffer zones. Despite the call within the Operational Guidelines for buffer zones to be adopted wherever necessary for the proper protection of properties, it is evident that many properties do not have this added layer of protection that enhances their resilience to external pressures and threats. It is furthermore significant to note that of the 53 properties currently included on the List of World Heritage in Danger less than half have clearly delineated buffer zones. As World Heritage properties come under increasing pressure from external threats, understanding potential factors that could affect the property and designing effective buffer zone and associated protective measures are becoming more and more critical. IUCN's World Heritage Outlook in 2017 showed that seven of the ten top potential threats to natural World Heritage properties related to human induced threats, often emanating from areas surrounding properties such as development infrastructure, tourism, alien invasive species, mining, oil and gas exploitation, etc.
128. Guidance to States Parties on designing, establishing, managing, evaluating and monitoring effective buffer zones is currently limited. Aside from the Operational Guidelines, the 2008 expert workshop on buffer zones produced a World Heritage Paper n°25 with guidance and case studies (see <https://whc.unesco.org/en/series/25/>). There is also guidance provided in the 2010 Resource Manual on Preparing World Heritage Nominations and the 2012/2013 Resource Manuals on managing natural and cultural World Heritage properties.
129. Whilst the concept of buffer zones for World Heritage properties is well established, it is timely to revisit and update guidance on what constitutes an effective buffer zone and how it should be protected and managed in line with the property's OUV. This is evidenced by the increasing external pressure on World Heritage properties, a growing call for improved heritage and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes and more emphasis on proactive Strategic Environmental Assessments. These processes aim to assist in considering the cumulative impacts of development decisions in areas surrounding these sensitive properties on the OUV of the property in question, and take into account the pertinent advice notes provided by the Advisory Bodies. Moreover there is increasing stress being placed on the important role that World Heritage properties can and should play in supporting sustainable development, particularly for communities within buffer zones. Lastly is the strongly emerging recognition of the importance of enabling effective landscape, cultural and ecological connectivity for World Heritage properties to ensure their ongoing viability in increasingly fragmented systems.
130. All actors need improved guidance on how to design better buffer zones to better fulfil the key objective of buffer zones to support the OUV of the property and on how to put in place effective protection and management regimes that prescribe and regulate development in buffer zones, foster sympathetic land use practices, contribute to sustainable development, and overall ensure good cultural, environmental and landscape connectivity with the wider setting.

E. “No-go” Commitment

131. At several occasions, the World Heritage Committee has expressed concern about the growing impact of the extractive industries on World Heritage properties (see for example, Decisions **37 COM 7** and **40 COM 7**). The Committee has urged all States Parties to the Convention and leading industry stakeholders, to respect the “No-go” commitment by not permitting extractives activities within World Heritage properties and

³ It should be noted that the figures regarding the buffer zones are approximate, as some properties are still going through the process of clarification by the States Parties of their delimitations at the time of inscription on the World Heritage List.

to ensure the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage properties has not been damaged by activities outside of the property boundaries. By 2018, the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), representing 27 major mining and metals companies and a number of oil and gas/energy companies (Shell, Total, Tullow Oil, SOCO) had subscribed to this commitment. Since the 42nd session (Manama, 2018), three additional companies, Eni, ENGIE and bp, have made similar commitments. The bp commitment came after several years of discussion with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN. The commitment announced by the oil and gas company Eni in October 2019 was more restricted, covering only natural World Heritage properties and limited to activities within the boundaries of the properties. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN are currently in discussions with representatives of the company to further strengthen this commitment, so that it fully addresses the Committee's current position.

132. At its 42nd session, the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Advisory Bodies, provided a detailed report on the efforts to continue dialogue with the banking and investment sector on the “No-go” commitment. At the time, 13 companies had confirmed that they had some form of policy in place and submitted it to the World Heritage Centre. In its Decision **42 COM 7**, the World Heritage Committee strongly encouraged all banks, investment funds, the insurance industry and other relevant private and public sector companies to integrate into their sustainability policies, provisions for ensuring that they are not financing projects that may negatively impact World Heritage properties and that the companies they are investing in subscribe to the “No-go” commitment, and invited them to lodge these policies with the World Heritage Centre. The World Heritage Centre is also currently cooperating with Friends of the Earth and Greenovation Hub, an environmental NGO based in China, to promote the “No-go” commitment with Chinese bank regulators, banks and investors. It is planned to organize an online event prior to the extended 44th session of the Committee to further reach out to the Chinese banking sector.
133. At the 42nd session, the World Heritage Centre and the UNEP Finance Initiative Principles for Sustainable Insurance (UNPSI), in partnership with WWF, launched the first-ever global insurance industry Statement of commitment to protect the OUV of World Heritage properties. UNPSI serves as a global framework for the insurance industry to address environmental, social and governance risks and opportunities and is the largest collaborative initiative between the UN and the insurance industry with insurers representing approximately 20% of world premium volume and USD 14 trillion in assets under management. The Statement is available at <https://www.unepfi.org/psi/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Protecting-our-world-heritage.pdf> and covers the insurance industry's risk management, insurance and investment activities and commits signatories to take various actions in order to prevent or reduce the risk of insuring and investing in companies or projects whose activities could damage World Heritage properties. In October 2019, the World Heritage Centre, UNPSI and WWF launched a guide, “Protecting our World Heritage, insuring a sustainable future”, to provide practical guidance to insurers on how to prevent or reduce the risk of insuring and investing in companies or projects whose activities could damage World Heritage properties, particularly in relation to sectors such as oil and gas, mining, and large-scale hydropower. In June 2020, the spatial finance report “Conserving our Common Heritage” was launched by Swiss Re and WWF to bridge the gap in due diligence for both insurers and investors to further protect World Heritage properties.
134. To date, 17 major insurance companies have subscribed to the Statement (full list available at <https://www.unepfi.org/psi/world-heritage/>). These include leading insurers, writing about USD 170 billion in gross premiums and managing USD 2.7 trillion in assets. In addition, the Statement has been supported by seven insurance and reinsurance associations, institutes and initiatives; insurance regulatory and supervisory authorities;

civil society organizations; academic institutions and other institutions that work with the insurance industry.

135. In another major development, the International Finance Cooperation (IFC) of the World Bank also clarified in its guidance note for Performance Standard 6 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources that investment projects in natural and mixed World Heritage properties will not be acceptable for financing, with the possible exception of projects specifically designed to contribute to the conservation of the area. The IFC standards are also applied by all financial institutions, which have signed up to the Equator principles. These include 111 major financial institutions in 37 countries (see <https://equator-principles.com/members-reporting/>).
136. In its Decision **42 COM 7**, the World Heritage Committee also requested the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, to continue the fruitful dialogue with extractive industries and the investment sector, including reflections on how to make these commitments and policies publicly available online to inspire other companies in these sectors to follow suit. In March 2020, the Government of Flanders (Belgium) approved funding under the Flemish Funds in Trust to further strengthen the work of the World Heritage Centre with the private sector on the “No-go” commitment. This funding will be used to create an online inventory of existing private sector entities who have formally signed the “No-go” commitment and develop a comprehensive set of criteria that determine a standard for the “No-go” commitment. The development of strategic communication materials for distribution across priority private sector entities is also underway in order to raise awareness on the conservation of World Heritage properties. Other awareness raising activities are being planned, including at the next IUCN World Conservation Congress.
137. Lastly, in addition to its work with extractive, banking and investor industries, the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with IUCN and WWF, has also continued the dialogue with the International Hydropower Association (IHA), regrouping the major players of the hydropower industry. At the International Hydropower Congress held in Paris in May 2019, a workshop was organized to discuss the impact of hydropower on World Heritage properties and protected areas. At the session, several case studies were presented and the Chinese Three Gorges Cooperation showcased its commitment not to build hydropower dams, which would impact World Heritage properties. Following the Congress, the World Heritage Centre has engaged a dialogue with IHA on how to integrate a “No-go” commitment into IHA’s sustainability guidelines, based on the relevant Committee Decision (**40 COM 7**), which considered that the construction of dams with large reservoirs within the boundaries of World Heritage properties is incompatible with their status, and urged 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 OUV. Currently, a joint working group has been established with IHA as well as representatives of the hydropower industry and international conservation NGOs to develop further guidance on hydropower development in relation to natural World Heritage properties and other protected areas. It is hoped that this guidance will be adopted at the next World Hydropower Congress.

F. Fire: impacts & management

138. Fire continues to cause damage to World Heritage properties. In 2019, fires caused extensive damage to the cultural properties of Shuri Castle in Okinawa (Japan) and Notre Dame Cathedral in the ‘Paris, Banks of the Seine’ property (France). Fire also caused limited damage to the Residences of the Royal House of Savoy (Italy) in October 2019, and in April 2020, a blaze damaged the main dome of ‘Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church’ in the National Historic Park - Citadel, Sans Souci, Ramier property

(Haiti). The Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda) suffered a fire incident in June 2020, which could fortunately be contained before it could spread. Risk preparedness measures at the Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex (Islamic Republic of Iran) limited the damage wrought by a fire at that property in May 2019, and the well-functioning fire system saved the Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama (Japan) from any damage when a fire broke out there in November 2019.

139. Regarding natural properties, in 2019 fires caused very high impacts on forests in Simien National Park (Ethiopia), for which International Emergency Assistance funding was provided to support rapid response actions and the preparation of a fire management strategy. In 2019 and early 2020, the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia and the Greater Blue Mountains Area (Australia) were impacted by catastrophic bushfires following an extended period of drought, with 853,977 hectares (or 82%) of the latter burnt. In 2020 and 2021, fires occurred in the Pantanal Conservation Area (Brazil) and Cape Floral Region Protected Areas (South Africa) respectively, with impacts on the properties still being assessed.
140. Fire-related impacts on cultural properties are caused by human factors such as arson, electrical short circuiting, smoking, open flames and bombing, or arise from negligence during restoration and upgrading works in heritage buildings. Fires may also arise from natural events such as lightning strikes, earthquakes or hurricanes. Fire response measures, such as the use of inappropriate fire extinguishing agents, may also cause unintentional damage to heritage sites and fire-retardant chemicals can have deleterious effects on nutrient sensitive natural systems.
141. While there are codes, standards, guides and other reference documents developed to address fire risks affecting heritage, these can be very technical, prescriptive or not easily accessible in the public domain, with limited awareness amongst key stakeholders. To address this challenge, UNESCO and ICCROM plan to develop a *Handbook on Fire Risk Preparedness and Response for Cultural Heritage* in consultation with the other Advisory Bodies, which would illustrate the key concepts, activities and procedures for assessing, preventing, mitigating, preparing and responding to fire risks affecting cultural heritage sites. The Handbook will elaborate on the workflow process that will help the users in developing a fire strategy, incorporating simple, tailored, cost-effective, risk-informed solutions to address fire risks during normal times as well as during restoration/upgradation works. While the scale or specific features of the interventions may vary, the Handbook will provide guidance universally applicable to various cultural heritage sites, including World Heritage properties.
142. While in many natural properties fire is a natural process that has shaped ecosystems and species adaptation, the increasing frequency and severity of fires caused by human-induced climate change is now resulting in severe impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem functions. Changing fire regimes are exposing natural vegetation communities to fire, where in the past they have been fire-free, and therefore not adapted to fire impacts. Altered fire regimes can also exacerbate other threats such as increasing exposure to disease and pathogens, increasing prevalence of alien invasive species, and shifting hydrological dynamics.
143. Fire also impacts on cultural heritage sites within natural areas and significantly impacts human lives and property for communities living in or adjacent to World Heritage properties. The impact of fire in wilderness, forests or other reserved lands (natural or otherwise) on cultural heritage values requires consideration. In many cases, it is becoming difficult to predict whether and how quickly the natural systems will be able to recover from such changing fire regimes and this will require further research. Additionally, indirect impacts should also be considered, such as for example, impacts on key species with restricted ranges, which might lose their habitat to fires. In cases where large percentages of World Heritage properties, such as the Greater Blue

Mountains Area (Australia), have been burned in single fire events, significant questions arise as to the ability of sensitive vegetation and/or rare fauna to recover as refuge areas are limited and under pressure. As fire events are expected to increase in the future due to various factors, including rising temperatures induced by climate change, ensuring conservation of such species will require specific management interventions as part of fire responses, but also in terms of assessing vulnerability of threatened species and ecosystems and adequate disaster risk preparedness.

144. While often there are limited awareness and resources available to help prevent or mitigate fire in World Heritage properties, simple and cost-effective solutions can go a long way in reducing risks in some properties, specifically cultural, whilst the threat to others requires a more comprehensive management response. Timely, appropriate and heritage-sensitive response measures should be implemented to save lives and livelihoods and prevent and/or limit the impact of fire on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to facilitate timely and effective response and recovery. There are opportunities to explore customized tools and responses which reflect the different circumstances of naturally and anthropogenically generated fires. New technologies hold great potential to aid in fire risk management, including monitoring and firefighting and their application should be further explored, while ensuring that they do not have any negative impacts on the OUV of the property.

G. Urban pressures on cultural World Heritage properties

145. In 2021, as is now usual, there have been a significant number of reports on the state of conservation of properties in urban contexts because of increasing pressures on urban heritage from the transformation of urban areas and their settings arising from rapid inadequately planned development, including large scale projects and cumulative incremental change, as well as mass tourism. These changes have increased vulnerability to disasters including those resulting from climate change and social unrest. In response to these challenges, the 2011 *UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (HUL) identified the urgent need to developing strategies and guidance that better integrate urban heritage in management and planning strategies and related systems for areas in and around urban environments, thereby anchoring urban heritage in urban development plans and processes. This approach is in line with Article 5a of the World Heritage Convention, which makes specific reference to the integration of heritage ‘into comprehensive planning programmes’. More recently, in its Decision **43 COM 7.3**, the Committee recalled the urgency to integrate urban heritage management directly into planning and development policies for properties in and around urban areas and to anchor urban heritage management into the wider social, economic and cultural content.
146. Previous Committee decisions have consistently emphasized the need to better address urban pressures arising from development within World Heritage properties and within their buffer zones and wider settings. The analysis of the Second Consolidated Report (2019) on the implementation of HUL, presented to the UNESCO General Conference in November 2019, showed that much remains to be done to resolve the conflicting demands of heritage conservation and urban development in order to make cities more sustainable, inclusive and resilient. As highlighted in Target 11.4 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the safeguarding of heritage is essential to make our cities “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.
147. It was in this context that the State Party of Japan, with Kyushu University, hosted an Expert Workshop in Japan (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/events/1516/>) in January 2020 to address the challenges of managing the pressures of urban development and change in and around World Heritage properties in urban contexts. This workshop was attended by 20 experts from Asia, the Arab States and Europe and included representatives from

the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM and the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research-Asia and Pacific (WHITRAP).

148. Historic urban areas in general, as places to live, have complex governance structures, often under the control of various differently mandated agencies. For instance, those responsible for heritage management may be different from those regulating urban planning and development, and those responsible for developing tourism infrastructure, leading to significant gaps and lack of coherence in policies and actions impacting on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of a World Heritage property. This complexity represents a challenge to the management and protection of all heritage values, not just OUV. The Workshop recommendations (Fukuoka Outcomes (<https://whc.unesco.org/document/182545>)) highlighted the importance of putting in place intersectoral governance mechanisms to manage the protection of urban heritage in ways that integrate it with urban development plans and policies, as well as other development plans such as the development of basic infrastructure, including services, housing, transport and waste, as well as facilities to support tourism.
149. Those driving urban development initiatives and projects do not always take into account the protection of attributes which convey the OUV of World Heritage properties, in the plans and processes at the local level. Hence, the need for integration of management systems for World Heritage properties into the planning and development plans and processes at city level is essential, so that the protection of the OUV becomes a key aim of city development projects. The importance of such coherence and coordination between different national, regional and local agencies and authorities has become evident in a number of World Heritage properties from Vienna and Venice to Prague and Cairo.
150. In addition, the Fukuoka Outcomes recommended that, for urban World Heritage properties and their buffer zones and wider settings, a comprehensive statement of the wider urban heritage values at the local level should be developed, listing urban features as well as forms and meanings that contribute to identify, as this could serve as a valuable management tool. The urban features themselves are specific to each place and have specific values, than can be captured through an indicative typology and framework of such features, as proposed in the Fukuoka Outcomes.
151. Regulations for managing change in historic urban areas may be inadequate as they often do not encompass all the necessary different scales, from the larger geographical setting to minor architectural details that might be necessary to protect OUV and other urban heritage features. Furthermore, in some cases, there can be inconsistency between regulatory mechanisms that seek to protect heritage, and zoning controls or development standards which permit new development of an inappropriate form or scale, or in inappropriate locations. Regulations also need to be formulated for specific areas within the property boundaries and buffer zones, and, in many cases also for the larger urban setting.
152. The pressures of urbanization and urban development in the context of the increasing risks of climate change related disasters on the one hand, as well as poverty alleviation and inclusive urban development on the other, has meant that a holistic approach to sustainable urban development, enhancing resilience and recovery, is increasingly necessary, for both local communities and for infrastructure, as was evident in the outcomes of the World Heritage City Lab organized in June 2020 by the World Heritage Centre in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2130/>). Furthermore, bearing in mind that World Heritage cities host living communities and the need to adopt 'inclusive' processes under SDG 11.4, the crucial role of stakeholder engagement, including the essential contribution of local communities, through all stages, needs to be embedded in the management systems and processes.

153. In this context, the mapping of intangible cultural heritage in historic urban areas and the use of indicators to monitor sustainable management of the role of heritage and culture across 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (such as the Culture|2030 Indicators) would further motivate the integration of heritage conservation with the social and economic inclusion of local communities in historic urban areas.
154. From the perspective that conservation of local features of urban heritage in the framework of the HUL Recommendation can be an invaluable tool to support the authenticity and integrity of the OUV, it is beneficial for policies, guidelines and regulations to respect such features to be integrated into relevant parts of the World Heritage processes from Nomination to Periodic Reporting.
155. In the framework of the 10th anniversary of the HUL Recommendation in 2021, a renewed effort to promote its implementation with practical actions to support and guide the management of World Heritage properties in urban contexts, is desirable and could be beneficial.

H. Heritage Impact Assessments / Environmental Impact Assessments

156. The three Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN) have been collaborating, in partnership with the World Heritage Centre, on the elaboration of a new joint World Heritage impact assessment guidance document within the framework of the ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage Leadership Programme, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment. The objective is to develop an impact assessment guidance for World Heritage properties, using a framework that can be applied to both natural and cultural properties and to small or large-scale projects, either within broader environmental impact assessments (EIA), or used stand-alone.
157. Following the scoping, research and collaborative drafting which included numerous workshops and presentation sessions in many parts of the world since 2018, the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage context* is anticipated for completion in mid-2021. The document has been prepared through an integrated approach following current best practice in impact assessment methodologies, thereby incorporating and replacing the 2011 ICOMOS *Guidance on Impact Assessment for Cultural World Heritage Properties* and the 2013 IUCN *World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment*. The document provides an outline of the World Heritage system, high-level principles and a toolkit that explains the clear process for undertaking environmental impact assessment and/or heritage impact assessment (EIA/HIA). The document is equipped with a glossary, tools and checklists for application. The new Guidance will help States Parties, heritage managers, decision-makers, communities or others in managing World Heritage properties in circumstances where a transformative action is proposed or undertaken in or around the properties – in particular those related to development projects, resource extraction or mass tourism – which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. The completed document will be made accessible through this link (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/eia-hia>).
158. The principles and processes of the new Guidance have already been introduced to a range of interested stakeholders, including State Party representatives, through a well-attended webinar series hosted by ICCROM and involving all three Advisory Bodies in July 2020 and a session conducted as part of the Asia Pacific region online training sessions for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in February 2021.
159. Following the completion of this new Guidance, the World Heritage Leadership Programme will be implementing various capacity building courses to support its utilization, in both online and in-person modalities. For the latter half of 2021, online courses will take place in collaboration with the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research-Asia and Pacific (WHITRAP), with more courses to be made available in the near future.

160. During the process of compiling the new Guidance, the importance of utilizing the mechanism of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that can be applied to policies, strategies and plans rather than individual projects was continuously raised. A subsequent toolkit on conducting SEA for World Heritage to supplement this new Guidance would be highly beneficial for the future conservation and management of World Heritage properties.

I. Conservation of fabric, skills and traditional and contemporary technologies

161. During the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Manama, 2018), the continued need to address the issue of reconstruction in World Heritage properties following conflicts or disasters was highlighted (Decision **42 COM 7**, paragraphs 22-28). At this session, the World Heritage Committee welcomed the [Warsaw Recommendations on recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage](#), which noted that it is *'essential to invest in long term capacity building in disaster risk management and conservation techniques, notably for craftspeople, in order to provide for a sustainable future of the heritage places.'* (also see Section II.B above).
162. Cultural sites at risk (see Section II.F above) highlight the vulnerability of our cherished cultural heritage, but also the urgency to maintain the knowledge systems, including the traditional skills and trades practices, that created this heritage.
163. The 2015 earthquake-inflicted damage to the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal), the 2016 earthquake-related damage to Bagan (Myanmar), and the 2020 collapse of a portion of the House of Wonders in the Stone Town of Zanzibar World Heritage property (United Republic of Tanzania) all present unique challenges with regards reconstruction of traditionally-built fabric, for which little knowledge and expertise exists.
164. In the absence of adequate skills or materials, inappropriate restoration may incrementally affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of some properties, such as the Old City of Sana'a (Yemen). The reconstruction of the Mazibu-Azaala-Mpanga necessitated that specific traditional craft methods employed for its construction be studied and revived. The project also highlighted the dependence of such projects on reliable supply of material resources, also for continued fabric maintenance, a challenge also faced by Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania), the Forts and Castles, Volta, Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions (Ghana) and Lamu Old Town (Kenya). Inappropriate restoration practices have led, for example, to conservation challenges at the Gelati Monastery (Georgia). The absence of adequate skills hampers efforts to address the weakened state of conservation of the Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna (Libya).
165. Conserving the integrity and authenticity of significant historical fabric requires specific and specialist, often traditionally developed, skills-sets and crafts related to knowledge-sets, systems, technologies and material resources. The continued development and intergenerational transfer of craft and skillsets required to do so is essential to the continued maintenance of such heritage sites and to the preservation of their authenticity (as exemplified by the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, in the Philippines).
166. Traditional techniques may also be important, where use is part of an attribute, which contributes to the maintenance of the OUV of a property, such as is the case for The Mountain Railways of India (India). To maintain traditional skills and trades practices, these need to find economically sustainable application in line with the 2015 [Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention](#). A particular challenge in this regard can be the decrease in demand for technicians in specialist areas, which means that older practitioners may not have access to sufficient work to justify employing and training future generations, unless there are projects available from a wider catchment than World Heritage properties. Where such 'market failures' exist, active intervention from

government (for example through targeted grant funding), may be needed to generate sufficient demand to underpin traditional trades and skills training.

167. At Abu Mena (Egypt) and the Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe (Sudan), a rise in the water table caused by irrigation requires the development of innovative bespoke technologies to deliver long-term sustainable conservation solutions. The Mountain Railways of India (India) must necessarily adapt both fabric and technology to reflect limited availability of materials (such as wooden sleepers) and contemporary needs for safe railway operations. Digital scanning techniques and analysis methods have contributed to the analysis and stabilisation of the House of Wonders (Stone Town of Zanzibar) and the Tomb of Jam Nizamuddin II, an attribute of the Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta (Pakistan).
168. Climate change is increasingly impacting the attributes of properties, such as at the Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta (Pakistan) where increased velocity of salt-laden winds is leading to fabric degradation. Climate change impacts can be expected to exacerbate the mismatch between traditional skills and trades practices and the long-term maintenance of the integrity and authenticity of World Heritage properties (also see Document WHC/21/44.COM/7C).
169. The specificity of each property requires that, over and above the careful tailor-made guidelines for monitoring, diagnosis and intervention be developed for their longer term-sustainability, skilled and knowledgeable people are required to perform restoration, maintenance and often operational activities. These skills and knowledge-sets should also provide for livelihoods for these craftspeople by embedding these in acknowledged and viable professions, where necessary supported by public sector programs. Conservation also requires the availability of appropriate historically utilized materials and tried-and-tested methods. Appropriate management systems can contribute to the longer-term sustainability of essential crafts, as well as the maintenance of renewable material resources.

J. Earth observation for World Heritage conservation

170. Identifying and monitoring heritage places remotely has a long history. In the early 1920s, scientists were already using aerial photographs to map archaeological sites and help them detect subtle changes otherwise not visible from ground level, such as buried roads and remains of buildings. The use of satellite monitoring for World Heritage properties was first mentioned during a World Heritage Committee session in 2001, and the application of satellite imagery and other remote sensing techniques for World Heritage conservation has since been referred to in Committee decisions on numerous occasions. A detailed report was presented on this subject to the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018) in Document WHC/18/42.COM/7 (Section III.I, paragraphs 100-107 - <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2018/whc18-42com-7-en.pdf>).
171. In 2015, a partnership was concluded with the Operational Satellite Applications Programme of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR-Unosat) to monitor through satellite images the state of conservation of World Heritage properties at risk, due to conflict or natural hazards. Together, the World Heritage Centre and UNITAR-Unosat published a thorough account of the impact of the conflict on Aleppo's cultural heritage, combining the expertise of imagery analysts, historians, archaeologists and architects to show with great accuracy and detail the extent of damage throughout the entire property. A publication that extends the analysis to 20 other Syrian World Heritage properties and cultural sites is being finalized.
172. As another example, the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) Secretariat and GEO Greek Office, has recently launched the Urban Heritage Climate Observatory (UHCO) as a GEO Community Activity that applies earth observation tools to understand and document the impacts of climate change on World

Heritage cities. The aim of the initiative is to place World Heritage properties in cities at the heart of local and national policies and actions for sustainable urban development and climate change by proposing local and practical solutions and mechanisms to assist States Parties to implement actions in support of sustainable development, adaptation to climate change, and enhancing resilience and disaster risk reduction integrated with conservation of urban heritage, and where feasible and relevant, contribute towards prompting mitigation actions in World Heritage cities. The UHCO also aims to support global efforts for conservation of World Heritage properties with the use of space data, products, and services in the framework of sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Heritage Policy for Sustainable Development (2015), by collecting and bringing together relevant data collected by multiple institutions on one platform.

173. In February 2021, the Secretariat was invited by the European Space Agency (ESA) to participate to a digital workshop entitled “Space for Cultural Heritage: How space technology can help monitor and preserve our cultural heritage” (see https://www.esa.int/About_Us/Corporate_news/How_to_use_space_to_conserve_histo ry). On this occasion, the Secretariat recalled that technologies such as satellite imagery can support the safeguarding of cultural heritage and that they have been playing this important role for many years. Furthermore, with the upcoming 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, that also marks 50 years since the routine civilian use of earth observation satellite data began, the close links between heritage and space technology are increasingly important. This is especially valuable in identifying threats to cultural sites, particularly for those in situations of conflict, that may be inaccessible.
174. In March 2021, initial discussions on the application of space technologies for World Heritage monitoring and conservation took place between IUCN and the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST), a UNESCO Category-2 Centre in China. Discussions are ongoing, with potential collaboration being explored around: provision of high resolution satellite imagery for evaluation and state of conservation monitoring processes; geospatial analysis support for upstream processes; thematic and regional World Heritage gap analysis studies; geospatial information updates for natural World Heritage properties; and stakeholder capacity building on application of space technologies for World Heritage monitoring and conservation.
175. It should also be stressed that there is a collective need to ensure that heritage professionals and institutions have the capacity and skill sets to use Earth observation tools and emerging new technologies.
176. Much remains to be done to further the use of space observation tools for heritage management including standardizing protocols and practices, developing a comprehensive, complete, accurate and spatially-explicit dataset of the world’s cultural and natural World Heritage properties, establishing platforms for sharing and gathering relevant data, and supporting equitable availability and access of such data generally, and specifically for initiatives such as UNESCO Global Priority Africa, Least Developed Countries, and also for Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
177. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, physical access to many World Heritage properties has been greatly affected and digital technologies have been crucial in ensuring continuous access to and monitoring of cultural and natural heritage (also see Document WHC/21/44.COM/INF.5A.2). Much has been accomplished so far in the intersectional and interdisciplinary dialogue between heritage and space technologies and cooperation among agencies could be further enhanced in the near future.

III. DRAFT DECISIONS

Statutory matters related to Reactive Monitoring

Draft Decision: 44 COM 7.1

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7,
2. Recalling Decisions **40 COM 7**, **41 COM 7**, **42 COM 7** and **43 COM 7.1**, adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018) and 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions respectively,

Evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process

3. Taking note with appreciation of the recommendations of the evaluation of the Reactive Monitoring process, as prioritized in line with Decision **43 COM 7.1**, requests all stakeholders of the Convention to implement them at their level as soon as possible;
4. Welcomes the matrix structure developed by the World Heritage Centre in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, which provides a clear framework to report back to the Committee on the implementation of the priority recommendations;
5. Also requests the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, and in line with Recommendation 34 of the evaluation, to present a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations, for examination at its 47th session;

Issues related to the List of World Heritage in Danger

6. Reaffirming the need to promote a better understanding of the provisions of the World Heritage Convention and in particular of the implications and benefits of properties being inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and the need to underline that removal of a World Heritage property from the List of World Heritage in Danger is a significant 'success story',
7. Mindful of its Decision **43 COM 8C.3**, which recalled that the inscription of a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger aims to marshal international support to help the State Party effectively address the challenges faced by the property by engaging with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop a program of corrective measures to achieve the desired state of conservation for the property, as provided for under Paragraph 183 of the Operational Guidelines; and noting that inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger also alerts the State Party about the international community's concern on the state of conservation of the property, provides a timely reminder of obligations that arise under the World Heritage Convention, highlights threats to the attributes of a property which contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and, importantly, initiates a process and pathway to address those threats, including the availability of additional funding,
8. Also noting that the development of a Desired state of conservation for the removal of a property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and a programme for corrective measures is a critical part of the procedure for managing and addressing threats to the OUV of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger,

9. Takes note with appreciation of the information contained in Document WHC/21/44.COM/7 (Part I.B.) and recognizes that the existing monitoring processes are leading over time to a significant improvement in the conservation status of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger;
10. Also recalling its previous request for States Parties to develop and submit DSOCRs for all properties included in the List of World Heritage in Danger by its 40th session in 2016 at the latest, expresses its concern however that less than half of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger have a DSOCR and therefore strongly urges all States Parties concerned to:
 - a) Use the 2013 Guidance to develop and submit DSOCRs with quantifiable indicators to track progress for all remaining properties as soon as practicable, with a view to having them all in place by its 46th session, with the support of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies;
 - b) Ensure that for any property newly inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, a DSOCR is developed and submitted no later than one year following inscription;
11. Acknowledging initial pilot activities to explore possible approaches and methodologies for costed action plans, requests these efforts to continue and calls upon all interested States Parties to support a workshop to develop a common methodology and guidelines for when and how corrective measures might be supported by costed action plans,;
12. Also strongly urges States Parties, NGOs, private sector and donors to redouble efforts to prioritize attention to those World Heritage properties, which have been on the List of World Heritage in Danger for 10 years or longer;
13. Thanks the State Party of Romania for having hosted a multi-stakeholders international workshop in September 2019, providing a unique space for discussions and networking of professionals regarding the preservation of cultural and natural World Heritage facing dangers, including exchange of good practice, and highlighting the benefits of the List of World Heritage in Danger;
14. Expresses its gratitude to the State Party of Norway for its generous support for a project that aims to improve the perception of the List of World Heritage in Danger, and also requests the World Heritage Centre to present a progress report on this activity to its 45th session.

Conservation issues

Draft Decision: 44 COM 7.2

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7,
2. Recalling Decisions **40 COM 7**, **41 COM 7**, **42 COM 7**, **43 COM 7.2** and **43 COM 7.3**, adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018) and 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions respectively,

Emergency situations resulting from conflicts

3. *Deplores the loss of human life and the degradation of humanitarian conditions resulting from the prevailing conflict situations in several countries, and continues to express its utmost concern at the devastating damage sustained and the continuing threats facing cultural and natural heritage in regions of armed conflict;*
4. *Urges again all parties associated with conflicts to refrain from any action that would cause further damage to cultural and natural heritage, including their use for military purposes, and also urges States Parties 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 sites included in Tentative Lists;*
5. *Reiterates its utmost concern about the continuing threats of wildlife poaching and illegal trafficking of wildlife and timber products linked to impacts of armed conflict and organized crime, which is eroding the biodiversity and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of many World Heritage properties around the world, and further urges States Parties to take the necessary measures to curb this problem, including through the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);*
6. *Also reiterates its utmost concern at the increase in illicit trafficking of cultural objects, resulting from armed conflicts, and appeals to all States Parties to cooperate in the fight against these threats, and for cultural heritage protection in general, including through the ratification of the 1970 Convention and the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols, as well as the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2199 (2015), 2253 (2015) and 2347 (2017);*
7. *Reiterates its call upon the international community to further support the safeguarding of the cultural and natural heritage of countries affected by conflict, through earmarked funds or through contributions to the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;*

Recovery and Reconstruction

8. *Welcomes the continued reflection on recovery and reconstruction and the broad dissemination of the Warsaw Recommendation in multiple languages as a basis for further reflections and also welcomes the dedicated webpage established by the World Heritage Centre;*
9. *Expresses its gratitude to the Polish authorities for the organization of the webinar “The invincible city: Society in cultural heritage recovery” in October 2020 and to the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) for the “Conference on heritage reconstruction - its economic, social, and psychological aspects in the process of post-trauma recovery” (Bahrain, March 2021);*
10. *Takes note of the various resources already published and in the process of publication;*
11. *Noting the value of accurate pre-existing documentation in the recovery of built and other heritage following destruction, strongly encourages the States Parties and all other stakeholders of the Convention to stimulate the documentation of heritage structures, including through cutting-edge digital technologies, to create databases of documentation for future reference;*

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

12. Notes with utmost concern the results of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which shows that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history and that no significant progress has been achieved on most of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and encourages the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to adopt an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which can bring about the transformative change needed to halt the loss in biodiversity;
13. Considers that the post-2020 GBF should provide a common framework for all Biodiversity-related Conventions and build on the strengths of each convention, and strongly encourages the Parties of CBD to take into account the recommendations of the expert meeting “Harnessing the power of World Heritage for a better future: World Heritage and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework” in the post-2020 GBF to recognize and better integrate the contribution of the World Heritage Convention to global biodiversity conservation;
14. Requests the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to continue to engage with the preparatory process of the post-2020 GBF, in order to advance consideration of the World Heritage Convention;
15. Also requests the States Parties to ensure that there is effective liaison between the respective national focal points for the CBD and the World Heritage Convention, to ensure that considerations relevant for the Convention are integrated in the GBF, and that the contributions of natural and cultural World Heritage properties, sites on national Tentative Lists, and other internationally designated sites are fully integrated and supported within National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs);
16. Further requests the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to report back at its 46th session, with recommended policies and actions to support the adopted post-2020 GBF be taken into account in the processes of the World Heritage Convention;
17. Requests furthermore the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to consider how the relevance of these proposals for mixed, cultural landscapes and other relevant cultural World Heritage properties, including those cultural properties that overlap with Key Biodiversity Areas, might contribute to the anticipated Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity to ensure further integration of nature and culture in the post-2020 GBF and to help achieve its vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050, and report to its 46th session on the approved Programme and how the World Heritage Convention can contribute to its implementation;
18. Takes note of the need for additional funding to be provided to support the achievement of biodiversity goals within World Heritage properties, in order to address their contribution to the GBF, and invites the Conference of the Parties of the CBD, in accordance with its decision XIII/21, to take these resourcing needs into account in formulating strategic guidance for the eight replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund and other international finance mechanisms to support the GBF, considering all elements provided in Section II.C of Document WHC/21/44.COM/7;

Buffer zones

19. Noting that a number of World Heritage properties lack formal buffer zones, in particular those on the List of World Heritage in Danger, reaffirms the increasing importance of

effective buffer zones to support the protection and management of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and building greater resilience of properties to external threats;

20. Recalling Decision **32 COM 7.1** and the 2008 expert workshop on World Heritage and Buffer Zones with its specific recommendations to improve guidance, enhance capacity and refine the Operational Guidelines concerning buffer zones;
21. Urges States Parties, with the support of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to:
 - a) Incorporate well-designed buffer zones based on a holistic understanding of natural as well as human induced factors affecting the property, supported by reinforcing relevant legal, policy, awareness and incentive mechanisms, into new nominations and where appropriate into existing properties to ensure enhanced protection of World Heritage properties,
 - b) Place particular emphasis on strategic environmental assessment and impact assessments for potential projects within buffer zones to avoid, negative impacts on OUV from developments and activities in these zones,
 - c) Develop buffer zone protection and management regimes that optimize the capture and sharing of benefits to communities to support the aspirations of the 2015 Policy for the integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention,
 - d) Ensure buffer zones are supported by appropriate protection and management regimes in line with the property's OUV, that build connectivity with the wider setting in cultural, environmental and landscape terms;
22. Encourages the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, through extra-budgetary support, to revisit and update the recommendations arising from the 2008 expert workshop to enhance capacity through the development of best practice guidelines for designing, establishing, protecting and managing World Heritage buffer zones;

"No-Go" commitment

23. Welcomes the continued efforts of the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and other partners to expand the "No-go" commitment to other extractive companies, the banking and insurance sector, the hydropower industry and other relevant companies, commends ENGIE and bp for subscribing to the commitment, and takes note of the initial commitment of Eni, noting the need to strengthen it in order to meet the requests made in previous Committee decisions;
24. Reiterates its request to all relevant private and public sector companies to integrate into their sustainability policies, provisions for ensuring that they are not financing or implementing projects that may negatively impact World Heritage properties and that the companies they are investing in subscribe to the "No-go" commitment, and invites these companies to lodge their adopted policies with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre;
25. Also welcomes the global insurance industry Statement of commitment to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties, developed with the UNEP Finance Initiative Principles for Sustainable Insurance (PSI), also commends the 17 major insurance companies and other supporting institutions of the insurance sector that have so far adhered to the Statement and invites other insurance companies to do so;

26. *Further welcomes* the guidance provided by the International Finance Cooperation (IFC) of the World Bank on Performance Standard 6 on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources that investment projects in natural and mixed World Heritage properties will not be acceptable for financing, with the possible exception of projects specifically designed to contribute to the conservation of the area;
27. *Acknowledges with appreciation* the financial support of the Government of Flanders (Belgium) for this work and *reiterates its request* to the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, to continue the fruitful dialogue with extractive industries the hydropower industry and other industries, the banking, insurance and investment sector, in line with its Decision **40 COM 7**;

Fire: impacts and management

28. *Acknowledging* the extensive damage of fires to natural and cultural World Heritage properties since 2019, and the growing threat of forest and bushfires to certain natural properties and their cultural values, including as a result of climate change impacts;
29. *Requests* States Parties to implement best practice fire management strategies to ensure the protection and management of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) including, where appropriate, to:
 - a) *Prepare site-level fire vulnerability and risk assessments, mitigation, Risk Preparedness, response and recovery plans in the event of potential severe fire impacts on heritage values,*
 - b) *Incorporate fire research, monitoring of impact, emergency response and mitigation and preparedness measures into management decisions,*
 - c) *Work with stakeholders to raise awareness on fire risks among communities and build greater capacity to respond and recover following fires,*
 - d) *Consider customised approaches and strategies that reflect the characteristics and circumstances of naturally and anthropogenically generated fires,*
 - e) *Explore the potential of new technologies for application in fire managing strategies, including monitoring, and firefighting systems, that will not have negative impact on OUV of the properties,*
 - f) *Take strong actions to address human-induced climate change in line with global United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) commitments;*

Urban pressures on cultural World Heritage properties

30. *Notes* that the pressures on historic urban areas arising from inappropriate or inconsistent development controls, rapid, uncontrolled and planned development, including large development projects, additions that are incompatible in their volume, mass tourism, as well as the accumulated impact of incremental changes have continued within numerous World Heritage properties and in their buffer zones and settings, and *considers* that these present potential and actual major threats to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of properties, including their integrity and authenticity, as well as increasing their vulnerability to disasters, including those resulting from climate change;
31. *Also notes* the unrelenting pressures of urbanization and urban development in recent years, the essential contribution of local communities, and the consequent need to support sustainable, compatible, and inclusive livelihoods for local communities and

embed stakeholder engagement in management systems and processes, with a view to seeking solutions to protecting heritage in the framework of sustainable urban development to counter and manage the impacts of this ever-present threat;

32. *Notes with appreciation the outcomes of the International Workshop on Historic Urban Contexts in Fukuoka, Japan, in January 2020 (Fukuoka Outcomes) as well as the World Heritage City Lab in June 2020 that proposed several useful recommendations;*
33. *Calls on States Parties to implement the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) in World Heritage properties with urban characteristics, in particular, following the methodology and recommendations of the Fukuoka Outcomes and the World Heritage City Lab, and use the opportunity of the 10th anniversary of the HUL Recommendation in 2021 to support key actions to implement the HUL Recommendation also in line with the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda;*
34. *Stresses the importance of carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments to evaluate and thereby avoid or manage potential threats to the OUV of the property arising from new urban development projects;*
35. *Also emphasizes the need to enhance resilience and recovery of World Heritage properties in urban areas vulnerable to climate change related impacts, in line with the HUL Recommendation and the World Heritage City Lab outcomes, while also enhancing the livability of the properties and their surrounding for their inhabitants;*

Heritage Impact Assessments / Environmental Impact Assessments

36. *Welcomes the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage context through collaboration between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, and thanks the State Party of Norway for supporting this work through the ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage Leadership Programme;*
37. *Requests States Parties to carry out subsequent Environmental Impact Assessment/Heritage Impact Assessment in line with the new guidance;*
38. *Calls upon States Parties and organizations to provide additional funding and support for compiling the guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment and support other capacity building activities on impact assessments;*

Conservation of fabric, skills and traditional and contemporary technologies

39. *Recognizes that repair after disasters as well as continued maintenance over time of the integrity and authenticity of the fabric that contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of cultural and mixed World Heritage properties require specific and specialist skills-sets and crafts, knowledge sets and systems often based in cultural-specific technologies developed over many generations;*
40. *Notes that the challenges encountered in the maintenance and restoration of the physical fabric of cultural and mixed World Heritage properties often arise from the lack of appropriate knowledge and skills among craftspeople, as well as a lack of appropriate historically developed and utilised materials;*
41. *Encourages the States Parties and all other stakeholders of the Convention to:*
 - a) *Stimulate existing (and develop new) research programmes on traditional methods, technologies and materials, and encourage (and, where necessary support) the intergenerational transmission of traditional and contemporary*

restoration and maintenance skills, and also embed these in management systems, thereby supporting viable professions for the maintenance of physical human-made attributes that contribute to the OUV of cultural and mixed World Heritage properties,

- b) *Facilitate the development of innovative bespoke technical approaches that enable the long-term sustainable physical conservation of significant fabric, where traditional practices can no longer address changing circumstance,*
- c) *Assist in the global dissemination of traditional knowledge, skills and methods for restoration and maintenance of physical fabric through exchanges, publications, digital and other media to benefit the maintenance and restoration of the physical fabric of cultural and mixed World Heritage properties;*

Earth observation for World Heritage conservation

- 42. *Recalling that Earth observation satellite technologies, spatial data and analysis tools have tremendously improved over the past decade and that they provide powerful additional means for decision-makers and stakeholders of the Convention to find comprehensive solutions to today's global challenges for World Heritage properties,*
- 43. *Takes note with satisfaction that the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) Secretariat and GEO Greek Office, has recently launched the Urban Heritage Climate Observatory (UHCO) as a GEO Community Activity that applies earth observation tools to understand and document the impacts of climate change on World Heritage cities and invites States Parties to contribute to the UHCO with data, expertise, networks, and financial resources;*
- 44. *Requests States Parties, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, UNESCO Category 2 Centres and other relevant institutions to continue exploring collaborative partnerships, which apply innovative technological advances in remote sensing to the improved monitoring and protection of World Heritage properties;*
- 45. *Reiterates its encouragements to States Parties to invest in the necessary institutional and individual capacity needed to make full use of such Earth observation technologies for the early detection of activities potentially harmful to the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties and to better understand trends and respond appropriately.*