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

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-third session

Seville, Spain
22 – 30 June 2009

Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: Global Strategy for a representative,
balanced and credible World Heritage List

10A Serial transnational nominations

SUMMARY

This document presents the progress made in the reflection on serial transnational nominations as requested by the Committee by its Decision **32 COM 10B** such as the main conclusions of the Workshop on natural serial properties, held in Vilm, Germany, 26 - 30 November 2008.

Draft Decision: **33 COM 10A** see point xxx.

I. Background

1. Taking into account the fruitful debate at its the 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), the Committee requested (Decision **32 COM 10B**, point 6) the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, to organize an expert meeting to reflect on current and future practice and strategies for serial national and transnational nominations, and noted (point 9 of the same decision) that a meeting was going to be held in November 2008 in Vilm (Germany). The meeting of Vilm took place and dealt with current and future practice and strategies for nomination and management of serial transnational natural World Heritage properties.
2. Earlier in September 2008, the World Heritage Centre sent out a Circular Letter to consult States Parties to the *Convention* on serial national and transnational nominations in response to which six written contributions were received. The issues raised in these contributions were discussed in the Vilm meeting and will be considered again during the next expert meeting, which will have to deal with both cultural and natural serial World Heritage properties.
3. The expert meeting which the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies were asked to organize to deal with the six issues identified in Decision **32 COM 10B**, point 6 could not take place before the 33rd session of the Committee because of the unavailability of funds. Currently, the World Heritage Centre is actively seeking extra budgetary funding to organize the meeting before the 34th session.
4. The Vilm workshop was held following the proposal by Germany at the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee. The workshop brought together 27 representatives of Serial Natural World Heritage Properties from different UNESCO regions, natural and cultural heritage experts, experts involved in IUCN evaluations of natural properties as well as representatives of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, UNESCO regional offices and IUCN.

II. Main conclusions of the Workshop on natural serial properties held in Vilm, Germany, 26 - 30 November 2008

5. The workshop was aimed at developing draft guidance and recommendations for nomination and management of serial natural properties, and discussing the issues specifically outlined in paragraph 6 of the Decision **32 COM 10B**, as well other topics related to serial World Heritage properties in general.
6. The workshop outputs include a report published in the BfN-Skripten series, and an analysis of the present situation of "Serial natural World Heritage Properties" prepared by IUCN and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, for publication as Number 6 in IUCN's series of World Heritage Studies¹.
7. The workshop recommended that standard and consistent terminology and language should be adopted and used consistently by all the main actors of the 1972 *Convention*. The key concept is that "a serial property is made up of two or more component parts" while normal (non-serial properties) should be termed as "single properties" to distinguish them clearly. Therefore, a serial property may be defined as a "property where two or more component parts are required to express the Outstanding Universal Value".

¹ This report is available at the following Web address:
http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_puball/wcpa_pubsubject/wcpa_wheritagepub/

8. In addition the workshop discussed other terms that are currently being used, such as cluster or network, and concluded that these could be used in relation to specific nominations where component parts have been grouped, but always refer to them as “component parts” e.g. a cluster of component parts or network of component parts. Furthermore, it was noted that for serial properties involving more than one country the phrase “transnational Serial World Heritage Property” should be used while the term “transboundary World Heritage Property” should be retained as a term for a single property that crosses one or more national boundaries.
9. The workshop concluded that serial properties have an important role in the future of the *World Heritage Convention*, especially in recognizing significant properties united within a single theme of Outstanding Universal Value. It noted that serial properties have the function of recognizing Outstanding Universal Value where the key values are not able to be displayed in only a single property.
10. The meeting recognised that serial nominations are generally more complex and challenging than the nomination of single properties. There may also be concerns about the practicability and advisability of some serial approaches. Serial nominations may have significant resource implications in relation to evaluation, the preparation of additional strategic and thematic guidance, for preparation of nomination dossier, as well as the management and coordination of a serial property. The workshop therefore concluded that a more cautious approach is needed to the encouragement of serial properties. This is especially the case for those that are complex, e.g. regarding the number of criteria (especially when mixed sites are proposed), the number of component parts, the number of State Parties and the distance separating the different component parts. It was also recognised that serial properties could inflate the World Heritage List because of the number of component parts they may include.
11. The background analysis carried out for the meeting revealed that many inscribed serial natural properties do not have overall management systems that correspond to the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*. Therefore, the workshop recommended that a management system for a serial property should at least ensure:
 - the harmonisation of management of all the component parts to meet a set of shared objectives of preserving Outstanding Universal Value;
 - the identification of and response to threats to the property; and
 - the coordination of monitoring and reporting.
12. The workshop concluded that, it would be valuable for the Committee to have the opportunity to discuss transnational and other complex serial nominations prior to their formal submission. The workshop recommended that the Committee should consider adopting a screening process to identify possible concerns and issues within complex serial nominations and provide guidance on their further evaluation, such as:
 - a) The minimum timeframe expected for work on the nomination to be completed;
 - b) The need to carry out the Comparative analysis and at the earliest stage (noting that this should be preferably before including the potential property on the Tentative List).
 - c) The identification of the likely costs of evaluation, and how these will be met, noting that the costs of evaluation for complex serial properties can be much greater than for normal nominations and that the Committee currently has insufficient budget to cover these costs.

III. Recommendations for the future

13. Following the conclusions from the expert workshop, it is recommended to adapt the existing format for the nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List (Annex 5 of the OG) as well as the format for submission to the Tentative Lists (Annex 2 of the OG) in order to fully cover the specific situation of serial properties. The nomination format currently does not allow sufficiently for description of Outstanding Universal Value and the management system of individual component parts, or provide sufficient guidance on how to present these aspects.
14. The recommendations and conclusions of the Vilm workshop, together with the written contributions of States Parties, may be included in the background document to be prepared for the expert meeting requested at the 32nd session, and whose conclusions and recommendations would in turn be presented to the Committee at its 34th session.

IV. Draft Decision

Draft Decision: 33 COM 10A

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/10A,
2. Recalling Decision **32 COM 10B** adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),
3. Thanking the Government of Germany for having hosted the Workshop on natural serial properties in Vilm, (Germany, 26 - 30 November 2008) as well as all the experts who contributed to it,
4. Takes note of the outcomes and conclusions of the Workshop published in the BfN-Skripten series, as well as the analysis of the present situation of "Serial natural World Heritage Properties" prepared for publication by IUCN and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation as Number 6 in IUCN's series of World Heritage Studies;
5. Welcomes proposals from States Parties to host the Expert meeting on cultural and natural serial World Heritage properties before its next session in 2010;
6. Requests the World Heritage Centre to present the conclusions and recommendations of the above-mentioned expert meeting at its 34th session in 2010.