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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 5 of the Provisional Agenda: Reports of the World Heritage Centre

5C. World Heritage Convention and main multilateral environmental agreements

SUMMARY

This document provides information on the cooperation between the *World Heritage Convention* and the main multilateral environmental agreements.

The document was requested by the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Quebec City, 2008, see Decision **32 COM 20**) for the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee in 2009.

Draft Decision: 33 COM 5C see point III.

I. Introduction

1. The Committee at its 32nd session (Decision **32 COM 20**) requested the World Heritage Centre to prepare a document on the *World Heritage Convention* and main multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).
2. The *Operational Guidelines* in paragraphs 41 to 44 include provisions for the Cooperation with other Conventions, including a list of these Conventions, and notes specifically: "The World Heritage Committee with the support of the Secretariat will ensure appropriate co-ordination and information-sharing between the *World Heritage Convention* and other Conventions, programmes and international organizations related to the conservation of cultural and natural heritage."
3. The Committee at its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006) took note of the coordination among the Biodiversity related Conventions and specifically of the joint statement to the Millennium Summit in September 2005 (Document *WHC-06/30.COM/6*). Additionally, it endorsed the "Strategy for Natural Heritage work of the Centre", presented as Document *WHC-06/30.COM/INF.6A* and welcomed the Centre's on-going cooperation with the biodiversity conventions through the Biodiversity Liaison Group and its participation in the Issue-Based Modules Project of UNEP to develop tools to help countries implement their commitment under multilateral environmental agreements.
4. Representatives of MEAs and other Conventions attend regularly the various international expert meetings organized in the framework of the *World Heritage Convention*. The Committee also invites representatives of the Secretariats of these Conventions to attend its meetings as observers. Cooperation on such activities and events are reported regularly to the World Heritage Committee in the Secretariat's report.
5. A joint web site of all biodiversity related Conventions provides detailed information at <http://www.cbd.int/blg/>. The cooperation of the World Heritage Centre with these Conventions is also featured on its website at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/blg>. An overview of the Biodiversity related Conventions and their main objectives is attached in the **Annex**.

II. Cooperation

6. The natural heritage component of the *World Heritage Convention* works in close collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). A tripartite **Memorandum of Cooperation** has also been signed between the Secretariat of the CBD, the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO and the Global Environment Facility Small Grant Programme of the UNDP (UNDP-SGP) for cooperation on various projects and programmes relating to the conservation of biodiversity through natural World Heritage sites, in particular as a contribution to the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas, and including on Forest Biodiversity. A partnership initiative under this cooperation was the 'Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation' (COMPACT), which was funded by the United Nations Foundation (UNF). The main objective of COMPACT has been to demonstrate how community-based initiatives working with local and indigenous groups can significantly increase the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation in natural World Heritage Sites and ensure that they are contributing to local development. This pilot project covered six participating sites: two in Africa (Mt. Kenya, Kenya, and Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania); two in Latin America (Sian Ka'an, Mexico, and the Belize Barrier Reef System); one in the Caribbean (Morne Trois Pitons, Dominica); and one in Asia (Puerto Princesa Subterranean River, Philippines). On the basis of this experience the COMPACT approach was mainstreamed into the UNDP-SGP as a whole.

7. In 2002 the **Biodiversity Liaison Group** (BLG) was established to enhance coherence and cooperation in the implementation of the biodiversity related Conventions (see table in the Annex). The World Heritage Centre is represented in the BLG, along with the Secretariat of the other biodiversity related conventions, and hence, activities are coordinated with the CBD through this mechanism as well. The effective conservation and management of natural World Heritage sites makes a significant contribution to reducing the loss of biodiversity. The last meeting of the BLG, which was held on 9 April 2009, was hosted by the World Heritage Centre in Paris.
8. At its fifth meeting in 2006, the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions decided to develop an **interactive CD-ROM on the application of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity** within the biodiversity-related conventions. The Principles and Guidelines were developed in response to Decision V/24 of the 5th Conference of the Parties of the CBD to assemble practical principles and guidelines and associated instruments and guidance specific to sectors and binomials which could assist Parties and Governments to develop ways to achieve the sustainable use of biological diversity within the framework of the ecosystem approach. The preparation of this CD-ROM was completed in November 2008 and a Circular Letter was sent, on 10 December 2008, to all States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention* on this matter. While the World Heritage Convention does not make explicit reference to sustainable use, Article 5 of the Convention clearly refers to the need to “adopt a general policy which aims to give cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community”. Paragraph 6 of the Operational Guidelines notes that “The protection and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage are a significant contribution to sustainable development”. The Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines provide guidance to State Parties on how to integrate this specific aspect of heritage conservation in the development of frameworks for sustainable development and use.
9. Among the key activities of the Liaison Group is the **harmonization of reporting** requirements under each treaty. The Centre has been part of this process and reflection, and representatives of other Conventions and of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre involved in this process have been also invited to the Reflection year concerning Periodic Reporting. Among the challenges was how the *World Heritage Convention* covering both natural and cultural heritage as well as Periodic Reporting and Reactive Monitoring could be integrated within a harmonised reporting framework. While it is difficult for the *World Heritage Convention* to adopt the harmonised reporting format of the other Conventions, which deal only with biodiversity, the World Heritage Centre has shared with them the recently revised Periodic Reporting formats and continues to remain engaged with the process.
10. The World Heritage Centre has also worked with Secretariats of the other MEAs on the TEMATEA Project on Issue-Based Modules (see paragraph 3 above). TEMATEA (<http://www.tematea.org/>) supports a better and more coherent national implementation of biodiversity-related conventions following a two-track approach: The Issue-Based Modules are web-based tools that provide a logical, issue-based framework of commitments and obligations from regional and global biodiversity-related agreements. So far, modules have been developed on protected areas, biodiversity and climate change, inland waters, sustainable use, invasive alien species, and access and benefit sharing.
11. UNESCO (covering both World Heritage and the Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB)) has also signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** (MOU) with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in 2003. As a follow-up, regular meetings between World Heritage Centre staff and the CMS Secretariat staff took place, including several during 2008 with the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement

(AEWA) Secretariat. Assistance was provided from the CMS Secretariat for reactive monitoring missions to specific sites in particular for the identification of specialists on migratory species relevant for these sites.

12. A close cooperation exists between the *World Heritage Convention* and the Ramsar Convention (based at IUCN Headquarters in Switzerland), as both are site specific and an MOU was signed between the two in 1999. Often joint reactive monitoring missions are undertaken to sites which are covered under both Conventions (e.g. Doñana National Park, Spain, Ichkeul National Park, Tunisia or Djoudj National Park, Senegal). The Conventions have also similarities in having two listing systems to address sites under threat: the Montreux Record (Ramsar) and the List of World Heritage in Danger. A joint list of World Heritage sites which are also (partly) Ramsar sites and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves is available at http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/brs/brs_ramsar_whc.pdf. The Ramsar Secretariat was recently represented at the international Workshop on the Future of the 1972 *Convention* (25-27 February 2009) and at the Bahrain Marine World Heritage meeting in recognition of the mutual interests related to marine and coastal ecosystems, and the World Heritage Centre is also represented on the Ramsar Culture Working Group and as an observer to the meetings of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel for the 2009-2010 period. Work is underway to identify those threatened protected areas recognized under both Ramsar and *World Heritage conventions* in an effort to further identify how the two Secretariats could coordinate their work in helping States Parties resolve conservation challenges.
13. While there is no specific MOU between Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the *World Heritage Convention*, the World Heritage Centre cooperates with the Secretariat of the CITES Convention in specific cases, where the issue of trade in endangered species is relevant for the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. An example is the properties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where ivory and rhino horn coming from the properties is known to be traded illegally to neighbouring countries. In consultation with the World Heritage Centre, the CITES Secretariat highlighted this issue at its 14th Conference of the Parties in The Hague in June 2007 and proposed to develop a joint capacity building programme for relevant customs officials. The Centre has also been cooperating with the CITES programme of Monitoring of Illegal Killings of Elephants, in organizing baseline elephant surveys and setting up monitoring systems in certain World Heritage properties.
14. The cooperation with the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has been very productive. The Secretariat has participated actively in all the work that was done for developing guidance in the field of World Heritage and Climate Change. The cooperation is ongoing as the World Heritage Centre has to solicit the input of the UNFCCC Secretariat on various petitions that continue to be received on the impact of climate change on World Heritage sites.
15. The World Heritage Centre has also cooperated with the Secretariat of the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). Attention has been given to the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area designation managed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The World Heritage Centre has noted that, of the existing sea areas benefiting from this designation, the overwhelming majority are located in developed countries. The World Heritage Centre is preparing a feasibility study on helping developing countries access this mechanism, in cooperation with the IMO, so that marine World Heritage properties could benefit from additional conservation measures.
16. No direct cooperation has been established between the World Heritage Centre and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITGPR) other

than through the BLG mechanism. However, within the framework of the cooperation with FAO and especially the “Globally Important Ingenious Agricultural Systems Programme” (GHIAS), issues of sustainable agriculture and land-use systems have been discussed. This concerns mainly the agricultural landscapes included on the World Heritage List, such as the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras (Philippines). Upon its request, the Secretariat of the ITGPR has been assisted recently by the World Heritage Centre with its experience in establishing and managing the World Heritage Fund.

17. The World Heritage Centre has also cooperated with other related Conventions in the Arctic region and contributed to the seminar on multilateral environmental agreements and their relevance to the Arctic, which took place in Arendal, Norway, 21-22 September 2006. World Heritage contributes regularly to the assessment of the application of the multilateral agreements in the Arctic, which is coordinated by UNEP. UNEP-Grid Arendal, the arctic centre of UNEP (<http://www.grida.no/polar/>) participated both in the “World Heritage and the Arctic” expert workshop (Narvik, December 2008, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/arctic/>) and the “International Expert Meeting on Sustainable Development in the Arctic Region in the face of Climate Change” (Monaco 2-6 March 2009, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/548>).
18. Although not an MEA, the MAB programme in UNESCO is of direct relevance to the *World Heritage Convention*, in view of many sites which have the dual designation of World Heritage and Biosphere Reserves. Hence, there is a close working relationship between the two programmes in the conservation of such sites. The other areas of cooperation between the Culture and Science Sectors of UNESCO were already reported to the World Heritage Committee through Document WHC-08/32.COM/INF.17.
19. IUCN supports the activities of the World Heritage Centre in making the links referred to above. In addition to its role as an Advisory Body to the *World Heritage Convention*, IUCN is also directly involved with the MEAs mentioned above and is therefore a key potential partner in extending the reach and connections between the *World Heritage Convention* and other international instruments. In addition to the instruments listed above, IUCN also acts as an adviser to the UNESCO Global Geoparks initiative, an ad-hoc coordination activity of the UNESCO Science Sector that provides a complementary mechanism to the *World Heritage Convention* in recognising Earth Science sites. In relation to its role as an Advisory Body to the Convention, IUCN has in the last two years enhanced its interaction with the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and the Man and Biosphere Programme of UNESCO, to ensure that knowledge and information is shared in relation to both evaluations and monitoring. IUCN notes that it has agreed with UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the CBD Secretariat to coordinate a part of its training and capacity building work on World Heritage with that for the CBD programme of work on protected areas in the coming year. In the view of IUCN, enhancing the connection of World Heritage with the broader global agenda on protected areas, and harnessing greater synergies with the main MEAs is an important strategic issue to ensure the maximum results from the *World Heritage Convention*.
20. In relation to the links between the World Heritage Convention and multilateral environmental agreements, ICOMOS notes that there are instances where cultural values and practices are evident, and play a role in the realisation of environmental objectives. Certainly, one of the strengths arising from the experience of implementing the World Heritage Convention for mixed properties and some cultural landscapes has been the capacity to demonstrate the interactions of natural and cultural values, and that the processes of conservation and continuing cultural practices can be strongly inter-related. In such cases, the best outcomes can be achieved where the conservation of both natural and cultural values is advanced in a coordinated and holistic manner. In this context, the role of the World Heritage Centre in facilitating the links between the World

Heritage Convention and multilateral environmental agreements is supported. In addition to its role as an Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS is also involved in the more recent Conventions for Intangible Cultural Heritage and Underwater Cultural Heritage, and believes that these will also have important intersections with multilateral environmental agreements.

III. Draft Decision

Draft Decision: 33 COM 5C

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/5C,*
2. *Recalling the provisions of the Operational Guidelines in paragraphs 41 to 44,*
3. *Notes the information provided on the cooperation between the World Heritage Convention and other multilateral environmental agreements;*
4. *Requests the World Heritage Centre to continue the cooperation with the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements through the Biodiversity Liaison Group and other mechanisms, including bilateral cooperation to enhance synergies and coherence;*
5. *Further requests the Centre to pursue a similar strategic approach to cooperation with other Conventions and programmes in the field of cultural heritage.*

Convention	Date (entry into force)	Objectives
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar)	1971 (1975)	The Ramsar Convention provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, recognizing wetlands as ecosystems that are extremely important for biodiversity conservation in general and for the well-being of human communities.
Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)	1972 (1975)	The primary mission of the <i>World Heritage Convention</i> to identify, protect and transmit to future generations the world's cultural and natural heritage, by drawing up a list of sites whose outstanding universal value should be preserved for all humanity and to ensure their conservation through a closer co-operation among nations.
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	1973 (1975)	CITES aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Through its three appendices, the Convention accords varying degrees of protection to more than 30,000 plant and animal species.
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)	1979 (1983)	CMS, or the Bonn Convention aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. Parties to the CMS work together to conserve migratory species and their habitats by providing strict protection for the most endangered migratory species, by concluding regional multilateral agreements for the conservation and management of specific species or categories of species, and by undertaking co-operative research and conservation activities.
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	1992 (1993)	The objectives of CBD are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from commercial and other utilization of genetic resources. The agreement covers all ecosystems, species, and genetic resources.
The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR)	2001 (2004)	The objectives of the Treaty are the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their use, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity, for sustainable agriculture and food security. The Treaty covers all plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, while its Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing covers a specific list of 64 crops and forages. The Treaty also includes provisions on Farmers' Rights.