

World Heritage Committee, 30th session, Vilnius, Lithuania, 8-16 July 2006

Decision 30 COM 7.1, adopted 10 July 2006

(as typed up, with commentary, by the Climate Justice Programme, 11 July 2006)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-06/30.COM/7.1
2. Recalling Decision **29 COM 7.Ba** adopted at its 29th session (Durban, 2005).
3. Also recalling the submission in 2005¹ of four petitions by civil society and non-governmental organizations on the impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage properties, complemented by an additional petition in February 2006;
4. Thanks the Government of the United Kingdom for having funded the meeting of experts, which took place on 16th and 17th March 2006 at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and also thanks the United Nations Foundation for its support, as well as all the experts who contributed to the meeting;
5. Endorses the “Strategy to assist States Parties to implement appropriate management responses” described in Document WHC-06/30.COM/7.1 and requests the Director of the World Heritage Centre to lead the implementation of the “Global level actions” described in the Strategy through extrabudgetary funding² and also takes note of the report on “Predicting and managing the impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage”;
6. Encourages UNESCO, including the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to disseminate widely this strategy, the report, and any other related publications through appropriate means to the World Heritage community and the broader public;
7. Requests States Parties and all partners concerned to implement this strategy to protect the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of World Heritage sites, particularly in developing countries, from the adverse effects of Climate Change, to the extent possible and within available resources, recognizing that there are other international instruments for coordinating the response to this challenge;

¹ This should be 2004. We will inform the Rapporteur.

² This request was inserted at the suggestion of Canada. It is seeking to ensure that the 3 groups of Global level actions described in the Strategy are hindered, particularly by not allowing them to be undertaken without special funding. The first Global level action group is “Establish cooperation with IPCC to assess the impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage; investigate opportunities to mention issues related to World Heritage in future Climate Change assessment reports”. But note paragraph 11, which is not linked to specific funding.

8. Recalling paragraph 44 of the Operational Guidelines³;
9. Invites State Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to build on existing Conventions and programmes listed in Annex 4 of Document WHC-06/30.COM/7.1, in accordance with their mandates and as appropriate, in their implementation of Climate Change related activities;
10. Also requests State Parties, the World Heritage Centre, and the Advisory Bodies to seek ways to integrate, to the extent possible and within the available resources, this strategy into all the relevant processes of the World Heritage Convention including: nominations, reactive monitoring, periodic reporting, international assistance, capacity building, other training programmes, as well as with the “Strategy for reducing risks from disasters at World Heritage properties” (WHC-06/30.COM/7.2);
11. Strongly encourages the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in collaboration with States Parties and other relevant partners to develop proposals for the implementation of pilot projects at specific World Heritage properties especially in developing countries⁴, as well as appropriate regional proposals, with the objective of developing best practices for implementing this Strategy including preventive actions, corrective actions and sharing knowledge⁵, and recommends to the international donor community to support the implementation of such pilot projects⁶;
12. Further requests the States Parties and the World Heritage Centre to work with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change with the objective of including a specific chapter on World Heritage in its assessment reports;

³ Israel proposed to add the Kyoto Protocol (KP) into paragraph 44 of the OGs, which simply lists Conventions relevant to heritage. The list in paragraph 44 currently ends with the UNFCCC. The US objected to mention of the KP, saying that it was not a Convention and anyway it was included under the UNFCCC. Israel backed down. Israel also proposed the following text which was paragraph 8 of the draft decision as it appeared in the afternoon of 10 July (30.COM/DD/.....7.1...Rev): “8. Encourages all States Parties to apply Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other available projections of climate change impacts to their World Heritage properties and, where relevant, use in their developed proposals for the implementation of this Strategy, their proposed adaptations to these impacts, including actions, timetable, legal and financial support mechanisms;”. In the discussion, the US said this was “redundant” in view of paragraph 5, and made (a rather incoherent) point concerning the difference between ‘projection’ and ‘prediction’. Israel backed down and so the paragraph was deleted.

⁴ The specific reference to developing countries was inserted at the suggestion of India.

⁵ At the suggestion of Canada, the previous text referred to „monitoring, adaptation, mitigation, and networking measures,” was changed to ‘preventive actions, corrective actions and sharing knowledge’. Canada said that this was to make it consistent with paragraph 13 of the Strategy. Nobody pointed out that the Paris expert meeting in March had agreed that it was important to use the UNFCCC/IPCC language of ‘adaptation’ and ‘mitigation’ to avoid confusion.

⁶ It is possible that a petition site could be the subject of a pilot project. To the extent that this WHC process can deliver practical effects in any petition site, this may now be the least unlikely mechanism.

13. Requests the World Heritage Centre to prepare a policy document on the impacts of climate change on World Heritage properties involving consultations with relevant climate change experts and practitioners of heritage conservation and management, appropriate international organizations, and civil society, to be discussed at the General Assembly of States Parties in 2007⁷. A draft of the document should be presented to the 31st session in 2007 for comments.

This draft should include considerations on:

- a) synergies between conventions on this issue,
 - b) identification of future research needs in this area,
 - c) legal questions on the role of the World Heritage Convention with regard to suitable responses to Climate Change,
 - d) linkages to other UN and international bodies dealing with the issues of climate change,
 - e)⁸ alternative mechanisms/ways of dealing with this without inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger⁹.
14. Considers that the decisions to include properties on the List of World Heritage in danger because of threats resulting from climate change are to be made by the World Heritage Committee, on a case-by-case basis, in consultation and cooperation with States Parties, taking into account the input from Advisory Bodies and NGOs, and consistent with the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.¹⁰

⁷ Paragraph 13 as adopted incorporates the Norwegian proposal for a General Assembly discussion in 2007. It is better than the previous proposal, in terms of the level of consideration (GA vs. unspoken), timing (2007 vs. 2008), output (policy document vs. unspoken) and range of issues to be covered.

⁸ This text in (e) was not finalized, the Rapporteur asking for more time to come up with the final wording.

⁹ Sub-paragraph (e) was the result of discussion on a Peruvian proposal, which was distributed in manuscript form on a separate sheet, when the main decision text was distributed in the afternoon. Peru wanted to insert into the decision a paragraph that “recommends that the World Heritage Centre present at the 31st session of the World Heritage Committee [in 2007] a proposal which would suggest alternative mechanisms for the List of World Heritage in Danger, such as plans, emergency measures, general strategies, or specific danger categories to confront the grave dangers to the Outstanding Universal Values of World Heritage sites which are produced by climate change”. Peru argued that it was “essential” and “necessary” for ‘special treatment’ for sites affected by climate change, as the danger-listing mechanism had its own rationale (i.e., based on management failures) - climate threats were not the result of management failures, and so a new mechanism should be found. He cited the example of the Rio Abiseo National Park in the Andes (river basin, Amazon tributaries), relatively untouched by the modern world, which he said was being managed well but which was being affected by climate change. The US first suggested a “modification” of the proposal, along the lines of ‘alternatives to inscription on the List of WH in D’, but then said that they did not want to add the Peru amendment. But Peru said “we would like to press forward” saying that without new mechanisms, danger-listing was the only mechanism for dealing with climate change. The Peruvian delegate seemed to be arguing that this was a good idea because otherwise a site could be on the danger list for decades. He also said, I think, but the translator was not very clear, that Huascarán could be placed on the danger list (but implying that this was inappropriate). Nobody spoke in support of Peru, the proposal fell, but the basic idea was taken up by inserting a new sub-paragraph 13(e).

¹⁰ This amendment was introduced by the US, saying that it was necessary to say something in the decision about the petitions, even though the text does not mention them. My first impression on this was that it was aimed at increasing the host State influence over danger listing (which can be made without their approval), but on seeing the final text, it looks as if it’s about slowing things down even further by (arguably) requiring consultation with any State Party (Saudi Arabia? or NGO (Competitive Enterprise Institute?). One government delegate told me that there was a lot of concern about many petitions being filed and said it was directed at that (but I can’t see it).