

## 1.67 World Heritage Convention

RECALLING the recommendations of the second, third and fourth World Parks Congresses and the 16th Session of the General Assembly of IUCN regarding the World Heritage Convention; the growth in that period of the number of natural sites on the World Heritage List to 102 plus 17 “mixed” natural and cultural sites, and the existence currently of 147 State Parties to the Convention;

BELIEVING that the potential benefits of World Heritage extend far beyond the sites which have been listed, since these areas can play a leadership role in setting standards for protected areas as a whole, can bring resources for training which will be of wider application and can be “flagships” in terms of raising public awareness of conservation issues;

NOTING that, while few World Heritage natural sites are pristine, many such sites, as well as many in the new category of cultural landscapes, demonstrate the practical application of the principles of ecologically-sound sustainable management as well as the conservation of natural resources;

CONCERNED that the Convention has not yet achieved universal coverage, the World Heritage List is not yet fully comprehensive, no global strategy has yet been prepared for natural sites, eight natural sites are currently on the World Heritage in Danger List, and that many more existing sites are coming under increasing threat;

RECOGNIZING that a number of State Parties to the World Heritage Convention are in arrears with their financial contributions and that resources for technical assistance from the World Heritage Fund are very restricted;

COMMENDING UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee and the World Heritage Centre for significant conservation successes over the first 25 years of the operation of the Convention and recognizing the important role of IUCN and other advisory bodies in these successes;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23 October 1996:

1. AFFIRMS that the World Heritage Convention is one of the most important international instruments available to achieve IUCN’s Mission and therefore affirms anew its commitment to the principles of the Convention;
2. REMINDS State Parties that many natural sites of outstanding universal importance remain to be added to the World Heritage List, and also that the new category of cultural landscapes creates an opportunity to include sites in the World Heritage List which have important natural values occurring in association with human use of natural resources which is ecologically sustainable;
3. ENCOURAGES State Parties to the Convention that have not already done so to :
  - a) meet their financial obligations to the Convention;
  - b) include natural heritage specialists on their delegations to the World Heritage Committee meetings;
  - c) submit voluntary monitoring reports as requested in the Operational Guidelines for the Convention and cooperate with the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre in the periodic reporting on the conservation status of sites;
  - d) prepare tentative lists, especially for natural sites and cultural landscapes, with a view to achieving more balance on the World Heritage List;
  - e) adhere to existing mechanisms for systematic monitoring to avoid World Heritage sites being degraded to the point of inscription on the World Heritage in Danger List and ultimate delisting;
4. REQUESTS the donor community to recognize the importance of the Convention for conservation and ecologically sustainable development, as well as the constraints of the World Heritage Fund, and therefore to receive favourably requests for assistance to World Heritage sites, giving priority to those on the World Heritage in Danger List;

5. ASKS UNESCO to strengthen further the professional capabilities in natural heritage within the World Heritage Centre and to propose to the World Heritage Committee a process to encourage State Parties to regularly update information on the values of sites already inscribed on the World Heritage List to take account of new knowledge and facilitate more effective monitoring;
6. CALLS on NGO members of IUCN to be more active in promoting the Convention, including promoting candidate sites and reporting on threats;
7. CALLS on all IUCN members, through IUCN's National and Regional Committees, and in other ways, to address World Heritage issues in their activities, including marking in some appropriate manner the 25th anniversary of the Convention in 1997;
8. CALLS on IUCN Commissions, and especially the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), to continue to give priority to World Heritage in their work;
9. CALLS on the IUCN Commissions, particularly the WCPA, to support IUCN's role in reactive monitoring;
10. REQUESTS the Director General of IUCN, within available resources, to:
  - a) promote greater awareness of the relevance of the Convention through education, communication initiatives and training;
  - b) collaborate closely with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) on mixed cultural and natural sites and in a systematic assessment of cultural landscapes;
  - c) build the capacity in IUCN's Regional and Country Offices to strengthen World Heritage expertise in the regions;
  - d) pursue, as resources permit, the preparation of global thematic studies of natural heritage in cooperation with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the World Heritage Centre;
  - e) expand the input into IUCN's World Heritage work through involving staff, IUCN members and Commissions as well as other relevant scientific networks.