

World Heritage Committee
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JOINT INTERVENTION OF ICOMOS, IUCN AND ICCROM IN SUPPORT OF THE DRAFT
POLICY DOCUMENT ON CLIMATE ACTION FOR WORLD HERITAGE

[Read by Mr. Peter Shadie, IUCN]

Thank you Mr. Chair,

IUCN is pleased to make this intervention on behalf of all three Advisory Bodies.

It hardly seems necessary to state in this forum that climate change represents one of the most alarming threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of so many World Heritage properties. Impacts related to climate change are being felt *now* and at *unprecedented* scale, across both natural and cultural properties with the potential to cause irreversible damage. The 2020 update of IUCN's World Heritage Outlook starkly illustrated how quickly this threat is moving and how wide ranging its impacts: climate change now affects one-third of all natural World Heritage properties. Also in 2020, the ICOMOS General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency, noting IPCC reports which paint a picture of increasing climate impacts, some of which may be long-lasting or irreversible. All three Advisory Bodies have proactively worked for many years to address climate change, both by placing the issue at the centre of our statutory roles under the Convention, but also via our own initiatives and resources. Document 44.COM/7C details just some of these efforts.

Mr. Chair the Advisory Bodies welcome the draft Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage as a major step forward in achieving the transformational change required to address climate change for World Heritage. The climate action goals and five areas of climate action, set out in the draft policy document, are underpinned by the latest climate science and policy, and represent a comprehensive framework to respond to the negative trends associated with climate change in World Heritage properties. The draft policy has advanced us in several key areas including recognising the need for precautionary approaches; aligning with the latest IPCC and IPBES science; integrating nature and culture; promoting transformative climate action; acknowledging the potential for loss and damage and addressing issues of vulnerability assessment, finance, enabling conditions and integrated climate planning.

The draft policy makes great strides in establishing coherence between World Heritage policy and the world of climate policy, including the Paris Agreement, drawing connections across the distinct, yet intertwined, areas to promote harmonization and mutually reinforcing policy and action on climate change. This coherence responds to a key request of the participants in the multi-stakeholder online global consultation conducted by UNESCO, who rated the integration of World Heritage properties into national and local climate policy as one of the top elements to be prioritized in an updated policy. We know that that it is the collective responsibility of all States Parties to address the causes and impacts of climate change on World Heritage and that an effective response will require not only every State Party to the Convention implementing the policy but also national and site-level commitments to combat climate change.

Despite the advances that this draft policy provides, we note there remains much to be done. Both the International Expert Workshop held in Vilnius in 2017 and online consultation revealed a deep concern about implementation. Meeting the urgent challenge of climate change means the new policy will need to be accompanied by guidance as well as a robust and well-funded implementation strategy at global, regional, national and site level. It will be critical to operationalize the core elements of the policy into the machinery of the Convention and its *Operational Guidelines*.

Furthermore, several fundamental challenging issues relating to the systemic nature of this threat also remain unresolved and require further reflection.

Mr. Chair, IUCN, ICOMOS & ICCROM reiterate our support for the adoption of the draft policy document at the General Assembly. We look forward to mobilizing our technical guidance and expert networks in partnership with the World Heritage Centre and States Parties to support the ambition and urgency needed to address this unprecedented threat.

Thank you Mr. Chair,