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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

Twenty-eighth session

Suzhou, China
28 June – 7 July 2004

Item 17B.I of the Provisional Agenda: Follow-up to the Periodic Reporting in the Arab States

SUMMARY

This document contains information on the follow up actions to the Periodic reporting in the Arab States, including steps taken towards the implementation of the Regional Programme adopted by the Committee at its 27th session, and the publication of the Periodic Reporting of 2000.

Draft Decision 28 COM 17B.I : see paragraph 6

1. In 2003, the Committee has approved a Regional Programme prepared by the World Heritage Centre as a follow up to the Periodic Reporting exercise for the Arab States, which took place in the year 2000. The Committee had also recommended that the Assistance Modules and the proposed projects contained in the Regional Programme be further designed in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies and the competent national and regional partners, and allocated the amount of 80,000 USD as seed money towards its implementation.

2. At the same time, the Committee had requested the Centre to publish the results of the Periodic reporting of 2000, making use of extra-budgetary resources, and to make it also available electronically in CD ROM or in the Centre's web site.

3. In the period from the last Committee session (June/July 2003) to the preparation of this report, the Centre has established two contracts with IUCN and ICCROM, to develop the Assistance Modules. These should be ready by November 2004. As a next step, the Centre envisaged the organization of a large consultative meeting at the regional level, involving policy experts, directors of heritage organizations from each Arab State, to present and review together the Assistance Modules prepared in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies.

4. On the same occasion, the Centre would like to invite representatives from the donor community, including from the private sector. The meeting, in fact, would provide an ideal opportunity for a fruitful exchange among beneficiaries (the States Parties), experts and technical partners (Advisory Bodies, experts from the States Parties, World Heritage Centre), and financial partners (Foundations, Representatives from Cooperation Agencies, private sector, etc.), based on scientifically solid, concrete and operational proposals (i.e. the Assistance Modules). One of the main problems identified in the Periodic reporting and in general within the Arab States, in fact, is the lack of capacity within the Region to formulate adequate project proposals complying with the criteria and formats of the International Assistance Requests under the World Heritage Fund.

5. It is important to mention that, in addition to the two contracts with the Advisory Bodies, the Centre is pursuing the implementation of the Committee's recommendations concerning the follow up to the Periodic Reporting through its ordinary activities, but also through its extra-budgetary projects. As an example, Training Modules are being developed thanks to an extra-budgetary programme on Development of Information Management Capacity, funded by the Flemish Authorities. The Centre is also taking every opportunity to foster the implementation of the Convention in the Region, with particular regard to the needs and priorities identified in the Periodic Reports. Training workshops on the implementation of the Convention have been organized (and are due to take place soon) for the Gulf States, which have shown some delay in the submission of Tentative Lists and Nomination Files, and for Iraq, further to the events of 2003.

6. In the mean time, the Centre was able to identify 20,000 USD from a Trust Fund established by the Dutch Government to support World Heritage activities, to cover the cost for the publication of the Periodic Reporting. This publication, which should be ready for distribution by the time of the Committee's session in Suzhou, has been also integrated into the Centre's web site. It contains a revised summary of the findings of the Periodic Reporting exercise of 2000, plus information on the follow up actions implemented by the Centre including the Regional Programme for the Arab States, as approved by the Committee. The publication is available in English and French. An Arabic version might be also published if resources are made available.

Draft decision: 28 COM 17B.I

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Takes note of the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Programme for the Arab States and in responding to the priority needs identified in the Periodic Reporting submitted by the Arab States in 2000;*
2. *Thanks the Dutch Government for supporting the publication of the Periodic Reporting of the Arab States;*
3. *Requests the Centre and the Advisory Bodies to continue developing the Assistance Modules, as well as projects, as part of the strategy outlined in the Regional Programme for the Arab States approved by the Committee in 2003, and to consult the concerned States Parties in the process;*
4. *Further requests the Centre to report, for the consideration of the Committee at its 30th session, on the outcome of the Regional Meeting foreseen in 2005 to present and review the Assistance Modules and mobilize extra-budgetary resources towards their implementation.*