

3 Understanding management in the World Heritage context

3.2 The 1972 World Heritage Convention: why and how to manage properties, and the need to comply

The basic framework for the World Heritage system is still that laid down by the Convention concerning the **Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**, unaltered since its adoption by UNESCO in 1972. The changing application of the Convention can be traced through successive editions of the UNESCO *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* from the first edition in 1977 to the most recent in 2012. These have been the main vehicle for the translation of the general principles of the World Heritage Convention into more detailed guidance for its practical application.

The World Heritage system involves a number of players. The governing body of the Convention is the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (hereafter referred to as 'the Committee'). This consists of twenty one members elected by the Member States at the biennial General Assembly. In recent years, the General Assembly of States Parties has taken a more active role in developing general policies for the implementation of the Convention.

States Parties normally serve on the Committee for four years. The Committee is responsible for the implementation of the Convention. Its principal functions, as described in the *Operational Guidelines*, include:

- Keeping the context under review (purpose of the Convention, institutional framework, definition of OUV and standards for protection and management) (Sections I and II),
- Nominating properties (Section III),
- Monitoring properties (Sections IV and V),
- Support and International Assistance (Sections VI and VII).²⁷

Role of the Committee is to:

- a) identify, on the basis of Tentative Lists and nominations submitted by States Parties, cultural and natural properties of Outstanding Universal Value which are to be protected under the Convention and to inscribe those properties on the World Heritage List;
- b) examine the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List through processes of Reactive Monitoring and Periodic Reporting;
- c) decide which properties inscribed on the World Heritage List are to be inscribed on, or removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
- d) decide whether a property should be deleted from the World Heritage List;
- e) define the procedure by which requests for International Assistance are to be considered and carry out studies and consultations as necessary before coming to a decision;
- f) determine how the resources of the World Heritage Fund can be used most advantageously to assist States Parties in the protection of their properties of Outstanding Universal Value;
- g) seek ways to increase the World Heritage Fund;
- h) submit a report on its activities every two years to the General Assembly of States Parties and to the UNESCO General Conference;
- i) review and evaluate periodically the implementation of the Convention;
- j) revise and adopt the *Operational Guidelines*.

The Committee meets annually in June / July and can also hold extraordinary meetings at other times of year. The Committee receives professional advice from three bodies named in the Convention. The principal role of these three bodies is to provide professional advice and support to the Committee and to the Secretariat (the World Heritage Centre). These are:

- International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (Rome Centre) (ICCROM), whose principal concern is training,

27. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide11-en.pdf>