

the state of conservation of the property (OG para 169). Para 172 of the OG *invites states parties to inform the Committee ... of their intention to undertake or to authorize in an area protected under the Convention major restorations or new constructions which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property*. Notice should be given as soon as possible so that the Committee has the opportunity to comment before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse. The World Heritage Centre or Advisory Bodies may also receive reports from third parties on emerging or sudden threats to the property which can affect its OUV, integrity and authenticity.

It is open to States Parties to request technical or advisory missions and International Assistance for such purposes. This can be done at any time and is not necessarily dependent on a Committee decision. In some circumstances, this may be a useful contribution to reaching a decision on a proposed course of action or intervention at a property.

In all cases, the Centre will take steps to verify the reports that they have received, and then request information from the State Party on the nature and seriousness of this threat, if the report did not originate with the State Party. Based on the reply, the Centre can decide to submit a 'State of Conservation' report to the World Heritage Committee, including a draft decision which can suggest or request from the State Party suitable management responses to address particular problems. This process is described below.

State of Conservation (SOC) reports process (IUCN):²⁸

- **Drafting decisions:** Following receipt of the information from the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies jointly develop a State of Conservation report with a draft decision with recommendations for action in advance of the World Heritage Committee meeting. The draft decision documents need to meet standards set out in the *Operational Guidelines* (para 23).
- **Adopting decisions:** The decisions are then reviewed and, if necessary discussed and revised, at the World Heritage Committee meeting. The process for the approval of decisions at the Committee meeting is laid out in the Committee Rules of Procedure.
- **Information on Committee decisions:** After the Committee meeting, the World Heritage Centre forwards a report of all the Committee decisions to States Parties within a month of the meeting (para 168). However information on Committee decisions may not necessarily filter down to all those working at the individual World Heritage site. It is therefore useful to look at either the World Heritage site page on the UNESCO website or the World Heritage decisions database to check the status of decisions in relation to a specific site. All decisions are numbered in relation to the agenda of the meeting at which they were discussed. Generally decision numbers related to SOC are COM 7: A, B, C
- **Implementing the decision:** The State of Conservation reports specifically require States Parties to report on actions taken to follow up on previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property. The site manager should be involved in this process, and there are frequently follow-up missions to review the implementation of actions highlighted in decisions.

It is essential that both the national and local site management authorities pay attention to these decisions. At this stage, the State Party may have to revisit the management plan or actions that are ongoing and see if it can comply with them or develop new actions to address

28. UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. 2012. *Managing Natural World Heritage*. Paris, UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (World Heritage Resource Manual.) <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-703-1.pdf> (English web page).