

ICOMOS News: ICOMOS World Heritage Panel 2015

From 23 November to 2 December 2015, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel met in order to discuss the 25 cultural and mixed sites nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2016. This year, nominations included one proposal to extend one existing WH property.

This year the Panel meeting was divided into two parts: during the first part from 23 to 28 November 2015, the Panel members examined and discussed the 25 cultural and mixed sites nominated for inscription. During the second part held from 28 November to 2 December 2015, ICOMOS offered the opportunity to the Delegations from each nominating States Parties to hold meetings with some of Panel members in order to discuss the issues raised by their nominations during the Panel meeting. This initiative, made on experimental basis, was implemented in the framework of early dialog between ICOMOS and the States Parties.

Before the discussions took place, Panel members rigorously examined a range of documents including the nomination dossiers submitted by the States Parties and the additional information, as well as the ICOMOS evaluation mission reports and further desk reviews provided by independent experts in the relevant scientific fields concerning the sites to be examined.

Over a period of nine days, the ICOMOS WH Panel, composed of international conservation experts from 21 countries representing all five continents, carried out in-depth discussions about the nominated sites in order to consider whether the proposed sites fulfill the criteria required for inscription on the World Heritage List and to draft recommendations, in line with the requirements established in the *Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, for the next session of the WH Committee to be held in July 2016.

If considered necessary by the ICOMOS WH Panel, recommendations were also prepared for the States Parties identifying specific, additional information to be requested in order to improve the understanding of the nomination dossiers or the management and protection of the properties.

This year, Interim reports as prescribed by the revised Operational Guidelines have been delivered to each nominating State Party in December 2016-January 2017.



To ensure the quality of the decision-making process of the ICOMOS WH Panel, the collective expertise of the Panel was complimented by the advice provided by the ICOMOS advisors as well as the knowledge of international experts from ICOMOS International Scientific Committees who are invited for their specific field of expertise and on an annual basis, according to the characteristics of the nominated properties to be examined.

Furthermore, each member of the Panel undertakes to attend the whole of the meeting, and to actively take part in the work of the Panel. In particular, each Panel member reviewed several files in detail and provided a written report before the beginning of the meeting.

All Panel members must take care to avoid potential perceptions of conflicts of interest. In all cases, an ICOMOS Panel member whose nationality is the same as that of the subject of the evaluation is absent from the discussion and decision-making process. At the beginning of the meeting, all Panel members are required to sign the ICOMOS World Heritage Policy Paper (available on www.icomos.org).

The Panel members undertake to respect the confidentiality of the discussions that occur, including the agreed ICOMOS recommendations. In finalizing and releasing the outcomes of the evaluations, communication with State Parties should be conducted solely via the ICOMOS International Secretariat.

The Panel working languages are English and French. Simultaneous translation is provided by ICOMOS through a team of professional translators.

Whereas Advisers' travel and accommodation expenses are covered by ICOMOS through the World Heritage budget, the ICOMOS officers, representatives of ICOMOS International Scientific Committees and invited experts are required to cover these expenses themselves. This year the World Heritage Committee allocated some extra-budget to allow ICOMOS to provide funding to some of the experts in order to ensure the balanced representation of all regions.

An ICOMOS WH Panel met again in March 2016 to discuss the outcomes following the November - December 2015 Panel, notably the responses received from the States Parties contacted with further requests, in order to finalize the ICOMOS evaluation reports which are submitted to the World Heritage Centre and distributed to the Committee six weeks before the upcoming WH Committee session. The World Heritage Committee shall then make the final decisions on whether to inscribe or to not inscribe a site, defer a decision, or refer a nomination back to the State Party.

List of 2015 Panel Members

Panel Chairmen

Alfredo Conti, Vice-President (Argentina)

Toshiyuki Kono, Vice-President (Japan)

Permanent Members (ICOMOS Bureau members)

Gustavo Araoz, President (United States of America)

Kirsti Kovanen, Secretary General (Finland)

Laura Robinson, Treasurer General (South Africa)

Gideon Koren, Vice-President (Israel)

Grellan Rourke, Vice-President (Ireland)

Peter Phillips, Vice-President (Australia)

Representatives from the ICOMOS Scientific Committees

CAR (Rock Art): Carole Fritz (France)

CIVVIH (Historic Towns and Villages): Samir Abdulac (France)

ISCCL (Cultural Landscapes): Nancy Pollock-Ellwand (Canada)

ISC20CH (20th Century Heritage): Susan Macdonald (USA)

ICAHM (Archaeological Heritage Management): Cees van Rooijen (Netherlands)

Invited Experts

George Abungu (Kenya)

Stefan Belishki (Bulgaria)

Jae Heon Choi (Korea)

Alissandra Cummins (Barbados)

Alpha Diop (Mali)

Tamas Fejerdy (Hungary)
Marcela Hurtado (Chile)
Mustapha Khanoussi (Tunisia)
Monica Luengo (Spain)
Herman Van Hoff (The Netherlands)
Guo Zhan (China)

Representatives from other Advisory Bodies (observer)
ICCROM: Joseph King (USA)

ICOMOS Advisors (non-voting members)
Susan Balderstone (Australia)
Luisa De Marco (Italy)
Susan Denyer (United Kingdom)
Albino Jopela (Mozambique)
Hossam Mahdy (Egypt)
Britta Rudolff (Germany)

Relationship between nominations and Panel members per region

Region	Dossiers 2015	%	Panel members	%
Africa	1	4	4	13
Arab States	1	4	2	6
Asia/Pacific	8	32	5	16
Eur/NA	12	48	17	55
LAC	3	12	3	10
TOTAL	25	100	31	100