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05 APR 2006

Ref.: CL/WHC.04/06/PS

To: Permanent Delegations, National Commissions and National Authorities of States Parties with properties inscribed on the World Heritage List for geological values before 1994

**cc: Chairperson, World Heritage Committee
Advisory Bodies IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM**

Subject: Change of criteria numbering for Natural and Mixed properties inscribed for geological values before 1994

Dear Madam/Sir,

This letter is addressed to those States Parties with natural or mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List for geological values before 1994.

At its 16th session (Santa Fe, 1992), the World Heritage Committee adopted a revision to the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* which included a redefinition of natural criteria (i) and (ii).¹ Based on the recommendations of IUCN, expert groups, and the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, the Committee decided to separate geological processes from biological evolution as it was then expressed in natural criterion (ii). With the entry into force of these revised *Guidelines* in 1994, the phrase "significant ongoing geological processes" moved from Natural criterion (ii) to Natural criterion (i).

The following table makes clear the difference between the Natural criteria applied before and after this change:

¹ The revision to the natural heritage criteria was a result of discussions between 1988 and 1991, recalled in working document WHC-92/CONF.002/10 (1992) (see <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/1992/whc-92-conf002-10e.pdf>). At its 15th session in 1991, the Bureau recommended that "individual criteria ... separately represent geological, biological, ecological and aesthetic criteria".

<u>Definition of Natural criteria, March 1992</u>	<u>Definition of Natural criteria, February 1994</u>
<p>36. A natural heritage property - as defined above - which is submitted for inclusion in the World Heritage List will be considered to be of outstanding universal value for the purposes of the convention when the Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria and fulfils the conditions of integrity set out below. Sites nominated should therefore :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) (i) be outstanding examples representing the <u>major stages of the earth's evolutionary history</u>; or (ii) be outstanding examples representing <u>significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment</u>; as distinct from the periods of the earth's development, this focuses upon ongoing processes in the development of communities of plants and animals, landforms and marine areas and fresh water bodies; or (iii) contain <u>superlative natural phenomena, formations or features</u>, for instance, outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems, areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements; or (iv) contain <u>the most important and significant natural habitats where threatened species of animals or plants of outstanding universal value</u> from the point of view of science or conservation still survive. 	<p>44. A natural heritage property - as defined above - which is submitted for inclusion in the World Heritage List will be considered to be of outstanding universal value for the purposes of the Convention when the Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria and fulfils the conditions of integrity set out below. Sites nominated should therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) (i) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, <u>significant on-going geological processes</u> in the development of land forms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features; or (ii) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; or (iii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; or (iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;

No change was made at the time to the criteria numbering of properties already inscribed on the List. Thus properties inscribed before 1994 for geological values were no longer represented by the appropriate criterion.

Sixty-five properties were inscribed under Natural criterion (ii) before 1994. Of these, according to a recent desk study² by the World Heritage Centre, reviewed by IUCN, 19 properties were inscribed for geological values.

At its Seventh Extraordinary Session (Paris, December 2004) the Committee approved a revision to the *Operational Guidelines*, including revised criteria numbering for properties inscribed for natural values (Decision **7 EXT.COM 4A**). In the revised *Guidelines*, natural criteria have been renumbered as (vii)-(x) as part of a unified group of 10 natural and cultural criteria.

The new criteria numbering will be applied as of 2007 to all World Heritage properties, whether or not properties were inscribed before or after the new *Guidelines* entered into force.³

IUCN and the World Heritage Centre believe that, in order to avoid confusion and to ensure that the World Heritage values are clearly and appropriately reflected in the management of properties, prior to the implementation of the revised criteria in print and on the web, the anomaly of the 18 properties inscribed for geological criteria before 1994 should be corrected.

² This desk study was based on IUCN evaluations, decisions of the World Heritage Committee, and other evidence considered by the Committee at the time of inscription.

³ The *Operational Guidelines* did not envisage two separate sets of criteria, or two separate definitions of criteria, which would be necessary if the revised criteria were only to be applied to properties inscribed after the revised *Guidelines* entered into force. Consequently the revised criteria numbering will be applied to all properties.

Furthermore, this change has already been requested by several States Parties.

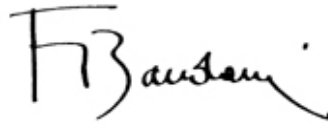
A draft decision will be prepared for the consideration of the 30th session of the Committee (Vilnius, Lithuania, July 2006) under agenda item 8 "Establishment of the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger" (changes to properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List).

A list of the 19 properties that would be affected by this change is attached. Please note that this proposal is not a reassessment of the values for which the property was inscribed. The status of the property on the World Heritage List is unchanged by this proposed action. Properties inscribed for geological values will remain inscribed for geological values: only the criterion number attached to this criterion will change.

Please send us your approval of this change no later than 22 April 2006. If you have any further comments or queries relating to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please be assured Madam/Sir, of the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Bandarin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Francesco Bandarin
Director
UNESCO World Heritage Centre

*This document may be consulted on the WHC web site at:
<http://whc.unesco.org/circs/circ06-04e.pdf>*

Change of criteria numbering for Natural and Mixed properties inscribed for geological values before 1994

The tables below, assembled with the assistance and agreement of IUCN, list in date order the different types of changes that will need to be made to the 19 sites inscribed before 1994 for geological values: properties for which natural criterion (i) should be added (**Table 1**); properties for which natural criterion (ii) should be replaced with natural criterion (i) (**Table 2**); and two properties for which natural criterion (ii) should be deleted (**Table 3**). The three tables show the existing criteria, the proposed change, and the criteria as interpreted under the revised *Operational Guidelines* (2005).

Table 1. 3 Properties inscribed for both geological and ecological values under natural criterion N (ii). Natural criterion (i) is proposed to be added

Date Inscribed	State Party	World Heritage property	Original criteria	Proposed revised criteria (2002)	Unified criteria (2005)
1979	United Republic of Tanzania	Ngorongoro Conservation Area	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)
1979-1992-1994	Canada/ United States of America	Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)
1983	Ecuador	Sangay National Park	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)

Table 2: 14 Properties inscribed only for geological values under natural criterion N (ii) before 1994. It is proposed to replace criterion N (ii) with criterion N (i)

Date Inscribed	State Party	World Heritage property	Original criteria	Proposed revised criteria (2002)	Unified criteria (2005)
1978	Canada	Nahanni National Park	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1979-2000	Croatia	Plitvice Lakes National Park	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1979	Democratic Rep. of the Congo	Virunga National Park	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (x)
1980-2005	Serbia and Montenegro	Durmitor National Park	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (x)
1981	Argentina	Los Glaciares	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1982	Algeria	Tassili n'Ajjer	N (ii) (iii) C (i) (iii)	N (i) (iii) C (i) (iii)	(i) (iii) (vii) (viii)
1983	France	Cape Girolata, Cape Porto, Scandola Nature Reserve and the Piana Calanches in Corsica	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (x)
1985	Peru	Huascarán National Park	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1986	Slovenia	Skocjan Caves	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1987-1994	Australia	Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park	N (ii) (iii) C (v) (vi)	N (i) (iii) C (v) (vi)	(v) (vi) (vii) (viii)
1987	United States of America	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	N (ii)	N (i)	(viii)
1989	Zambia/Zimbabwe	Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1990-1993	New Zealand	Tongariro National Park	N (ii) (iii) C (vi)	N (i) (iii) C (vi)	(vi) (vii) (viii)
1992	Australia	Fraser Island	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)

Table 3: Properties already inscribed under natural criterion (i) as an example of major stages of the earth’s evolutionary history and for geological values only under natural criterion (ii).

It is proposed to delete criterion N (ii).

Date Inscribed	State Party	World Heritage property	Original criteria	Proposed revised criteria (2002)	Unified criteria (2005)
1984-1990	Canada	Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks	N (i) (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1984	United States of America	Yosemite National Park	N (i) (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)