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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirtieth Session

Vilnius, Lithuania

8-16 July 2006

**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: Examination of the State of Conservation of
World Heritage properties**

**7B. State of conservation reports of properties inscribed on the World Heritage
List**

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1. Historic Centre of Mexico City and Xochimilco (Mexico) (C 412)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List:

1987

Criteria:

C (ii) (iii) (iv) (v)

Year(s) of inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger:

N/A

International Assistance:

Total amount provided to the property: N/A

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds:

Total amount provided to the property: N/A

Previous Committee Decisions:

29 COM 7B.103

Main threats identified in previous reports:

- a) Pressure from Urban Development;
- b) Urban decay of the Historic Centre;
- c) Natural disasters (seismic instability and continued sinking of the city caused by the depletion of the aquifer);
- d) Water and environmental pollution;
- e) Lack of infrastructure;
- f) Pressure from Tourism;
- g) Lack of management mechanisms (including legislation);
- h) Lack of institutional coordination;
- i) Lack of monitoring systems;
- j) Lack of human and/or financial resources.

Current Conservation issues:

Conservation and restoration works have been undertaken in the Historic Centre of Mexico City during the period 2002-2006. The Xochimilco area of the site, in particular, has been subjected to investigations to determine which World Heritage criteria would justify extending or changing the current definition of Xochimilco as a cultural site into a cultural landscape by incorporating the *chinampas* (floating gardens) and canal areas.

The report requested by the World Heritage Committee in 2003 on the progress made on the design, adoption and implementation of the management plan for the Historic Centre of Mexico and Xochimilco was submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre on 24 March 2006. In addition, the World Heritage Centre received a comprehensive CD-Rom entitled *Xochimilco: un proceso de Gestion Participativa* on the progress of the Proyecto UNESCO Xochimilco (PUX), through the UNESCO office in Mexico in March 2006.

The participatory rehabilitation programme of the Historic Centre of Mexico City focuses on promoting repopulation in four main central districts (*delegaciones centrales*) by improving their infrastructure and living conditions through waste management, public lighting, and transport. The facades of historic buildings have been restored and those beyond repair have been demolished for security of the inhabitants. However, the rehabilitation plan did not mention the water table issue, which was one of the reasons for the inscription of the site on the 2006 World Monuments Fund Watch List of the 100 Most Endangered sites.

As per Xochimilco, the PUX was initiated in 2002, during the First Seminar on the *Full Recovery of Xochimilco World Heritage*, organized under the auspices of the UNESCO and FAO offices in Mexico, with the objective of involving international institutions, the Federal Government and the Federal District's Government in the preparation of a management plan for the Rehabilitation of Xochimilco; obtaining legal provisions and funds from the Government; establishing mechanisms for community participation in the design and implementation of this management plan.

At present the second phase of the PUX has successfully reached its three main objectives. These are:

- a) To obtain political support for the elaboration of a management plan. Consensus among the various actors involved in the process was reached thanks to an inter-

institutional and inter-disciplinary approach and also thanks to the SIRCHAL seminars, which contributed to the identification of a long term strategy with respect to the water management problems of Xochimilco; involving not only local institutions but also the international network of *humedales* (humid areas, such as the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps de Marais d'Opale);

- b) To officially create a *Comisión Interdependencial* (involving several institutional bodies);
- c) To identify (on the basis of an inventory of the *chinampas* and surrounding areas) new boundaries of the site and a long term management plan with a strong participatory focus, which encompasses the preservation of both natural and cultural aspects of the site.

The constant effort to involve not only political and administrative bodies, but also the local population, which has always expressed interest and commitment, was of major importance in this process. The role played by the UNESCO Office in Mexico as facilitator of negotiations among the various stakeholders has been catalytic to the harmonious momentum and the agreement reached.

Building on these first successes, the participative approach of the management plan will continue and will focus on the following six main items by establishing technical working committees, in which experts, decision makers and civil society will be equally represented: (i) water management; (ii) historic centre and integral heritage; (iii) *chinampas*; (iv) productive activities related to heritage; (v) illegal occupation of public spaces; (vi) communication, promotion and education.

Draft Decision: 30 COM 7B.96

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-06/30.COM/7B,*
2. *Recalling the results of the November 2002 ICOMOS mission findings and Decisions 27 COM 7B.95 and 29 COM 7B.103 adopted at its 27th (UNESCO, 2003) and 29th (Durban, 2005) sessions respectively;*
3. *Congratulates the State Party for the results reached to present in regards to the Xochimilco project;*
4. *Reminds the State Party that it is absolutely necessary to follow-up on these achievements (completion and implementation of the management plan and creation of a management unit). An inconclusive process would put the site in danger and jeopardize the participatory commitment to the site;*
5. *Requests the State Party and ICOMOS to consult with IUCN on the conservation and effective management of Natural Areas and Ecological Zones in order to ensure the protection of the natural environment of the heritage site;*
6. *Further requests that the State Party submit a detailed and specific report to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2007, on the measures to be taken with respect to the lowering of the water table beneath the World Heritage property*

and the implementation of the management plan for examination by the Committee at its 31st session in 2007.