

Statement IIPFWH item 5A (Report World Heritage Center)

Thank you Madam Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage which was established last year in Krakow by the indigenous peoples' delegates present for 41 COM. Through this forum, we aim to develop a coordinated, constructive and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all processes of the World Heritage Convention. We very much appreciate Decision 41COM 7 which notes the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Forum as an important platform on the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the identification, conservation and management of World Heritage properties.

The World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy includes special sections on the need to ensure respect for indigenous peoples and their rights in World Heritage processes. To be effective, however, the policy will need to be followed up with changes to the Operational Guidelines and other measures to translate its principles into actual operational procedures.

In that respect, we note, that the report of the World Heritage Center being considered here¹ does not mention the implementation of decision 39 COM 11 on the Revision of the Operational Guidelines, in which the Committee reiterated its decision to reexamine the recommendations of the 2012 Expert Workshop on World Heritage and Indigenous Peoples in Copenhagen following the results of the discussions by the Executive Board on the UNESCO policy on indigenous peoples.

The Policy was adopted by the Executive Board in October 2017, and repeats that UNESCO is committed to the full realization of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We therefore kindly request this Committee meeting to take a decision on reexamining the aforementioned recommendations, possibly through the establishment of a working group to be convened inter-sessionally.

Finally Madam Chairperson, we kindly invite all States and organizations here, to the formal launch event of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage, tonight at 6.30h p.m. in room Hawar. At this event, we will provide an overview of our provisional strategy for the stronger engagement of indigenous peoples with the World Heritage Convention, including the work of the Advisory Bodies who have warmly welcomed the establishment of the Forum.

Thank you Madam Chairperson

¹ Document WHC/18/42.COM/5A