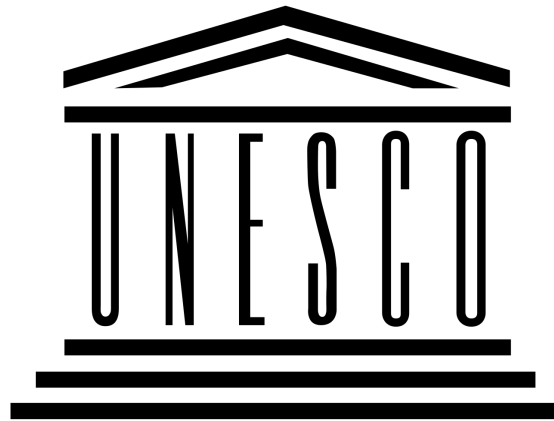


— BTUMUN'26 —

UNESCO

STUDY GUIDE



Agenda Item: Expanding the UNESCO World Heritage List to Include Underrepresented Regions

President Chair: Sude Yorulmaz

Co-Chair: Beril Özdemir

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1. Letter from the Chairs

My name is Sude Yorulmaz and I am a 12th grade student at Bodrum Anatolian High School. I will take part as your president chair in this committee. This is my second time being on the chairboard and I am pleased to have this experience with you.

I have been a delegate for five times before so I can understand how stressful it can be. However the stress is nothing besides the passion of learning more. So if you really come to this conference to improve yourself and your debating skills I respect you.

For the first timers I know being a first timer seems scary and sometimes it really can be but believe me if you try hard enough and speak up you can easily manage to be a part of the discussions. For the experienced delegates I expect you to work hard and help the first timers. And for all delegates I highly encourage you to study before the sessions and participate in the discussions.

Most importantly I wish you guys to have so much fun.
If you have any questions you can contact me and my dear co-chair.

Sincerely,

Sude Yorulmaz

President Chair

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to BTUMUN'26 UNESCO committee!! I'm really excited to see the energy, creativity, and different perspectives each of you will bring into the room.

My name is Beril Özdemir and I am a 10th grade student at Bodrum Final Academy Schools. I will be your co chair throughout this conference, so if you have any questions don't hesitate to ask. :)

Before anything else, I would like to share that this is my very first time serving on the chairboard. That makes this conference even more meaningful for me, and I'm just as eager as you are to make this experience productive and memorable for everyone involved.

For first timers, I'd like to remind you that you shouldn't stress too much about being perfect, no one really is. The best thing you can do is participate. Even if you're unsure, raising your placard, asking a question, or giving a short speech makes a huge difference in boosting your confidence. And most importantly, just be yourself and make the most of this conference.

For everyone, whether experienced or new, just try to stay active, respect each other, and enjoy the committee. <3

Sincerely,

Beril Özdemir

Co-Chair

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2. Introduction

2.1. Introduction to the Committee:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations, established in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II. It has over 190 member states and 12 associate members. UNESCO also collaborates closely with non governmental, intergovernmental and private sector partners.

UNESCO's main focus is to promote international peace and security through international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication.

Within this framework, UNESCO serves as a platform to address issues such as cultural heritage, the protection and sharing of knowledge, and the improvement of education systems worldwide.

Furthermore, UNESCO plays a vital role in safeguarding the cultural and social foundations that support stability, human dignity and sustainable recovery. (Particularly in regions affected by crises and conflict.)

2.2. Introduction to the Topic:

UNESCO is conducted by three main bodies: the General Conference, the Secretariat and the Executive Board.

The General Conference determines the policies and the main lines of work of the organization. It happens every other year and it includes representatives of UNESCO's member states.

The Secretariat is responsible for the execution of the works of the Executive Board. It is led by the Director General and composed of roughly 2300 international civil servants.

These bodies help to choose places to include the World Heritage List.

UNESCO chooses World Heritage Sites based on their "Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)" and due to its criterias.



To be a part of the World Heritage List a site must meet these 10 criterias:

- (i)** to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii)** to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii)** to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv)** to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v)** to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi)** to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);
- (vii)** to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii)** to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix)** to 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;
- (x)** to 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.



2.3. History of the Topic:

The idea of building an organisation that aims to protect the world heritage, use science, education and culture to construct a better, wiser society began after World War II in early 1942. In November of 1972 the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO. After that, in 1978 the first sites in the World Heritage List were determined.

However, over time it became clear that the World Heritage List was unbalanced. Many sites were concentrated in specific regions such as Europe and North America, including famously known sites like Palace of Versailles and Statue of Liberty, while Africa and the Pacific remained underrepresented. For example, countries like Chad and Papua New Guinea have significantly fewer World Heritage sites despite their rich cultural and natural heritage. In response, UNESCO decided to introduce the Global Strategy in 1994 to promote a more balanced and representative list.

There are currently 1248 sites in the World Heritage List across 194 member states; inequalities still exist due to financial, political and technical challenges. This ongoing imbalance shows the need for further expansion and reform of the World Heritage List to reflect global diversity better.

The issue remains highly relevant as many culturally and naturally significant sites continue to be excluded from global protection. Problems such as climate change, urbanisation and ongoing conflicts further threaten important heritage sites; especially in underrepresented regions. Ensuring a more inclusive and balanced World Heritage List is essential not only for protecting global heritage, but also for promoting cultural diversity, international cooperation and sustainable development worldwide.



3. Definition of Key Terms & Phrases:

Advisory Bodies: A nominated property undergoes independent evaluation by two Advisory Bodies of the World Heritage Convention: ICOMOS for cultural sites and IUCN for natural sites. Additionally, ICCROM offers expert advice on the conservation of cultural properties and training activities.

ICOMOS: An advisory body responsible for evaluating cultural heritage sites.

IUCN: An advisory body that evaluates natural heritage sites.

Authenticity: The credibility and originality of a heritage site in terms of its cultural value.

Accession: A process in which a state agrees to join a treaty that has already been negotiated and signed by others, providing the same legal impact as ratification.

Bilateral agreement: A generic term for treaties, conventions, protocols, and other binding instruments. This term is usually applied to instruments of a geographic scope between two states.

Buffer zones: A neutral, designated area located between two or more, often conflicting, forces, territories, or land uses, intended to reduce tension, prevent conflict, or protect sensitive environments.

Capacity Building: Strengthening the skills and resources of countries to manage and nominate heritage sites.

Climate Change Adaption: Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

Conservation: Identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage.

Cultural Diversity: The manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies.



Endangered Heritage Sites: Sites that are at risk due to threats such as conflict, climate change, or neglect.

Equitable Access: Fair opportunities for all countries to participate in the nomination process.

Global Imbalance: The unequal distribution of World Heritage Sites across different regions of the world.

Heritage Management Plan: A document that identifies a site's cultural heritage values and outlines policies to manage, conserve, and protect it for the future.

Intangible Cultural Heritage: Traditions, practices, and expressions that are not physical but hold cultural significance.

Monitoring: Allows the World Heritage Committee to accurately assess the conditions at the site-level and decides on possible measures to guarantee that the OUV is satisfactorily preserved.

Natural Heritage: Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view.

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) : A UNESCO concept defining cultural or natural significance so exceptional it transcends national boundaries and is critically important to all humanity.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Tentative List: The first step a country must take is making an 'inventory' of its important natural and cultural heritage sites located within its boundaries.

Transnational: Processes, organizations, or activities that extend or operate across national borders, involving multiple nations rather than just one.



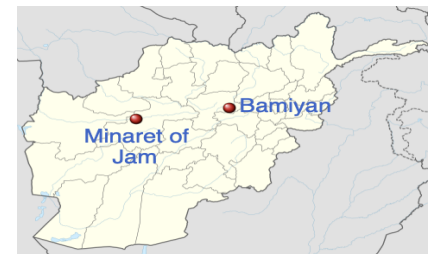
4. Major Countries Involved:

United States: United States claims that UNESCO represents anti Israel prejudice and the country constantly changes its membership currency. This situation makes it harder to Universally protect the Heritages in the United States of America.



Congo: There are sites that are listed as endangered by UNESCO in Congo more than one and most of them are now endangered because of the country's negligence.

Afghanistan: Even if there are sites that are protected by UNESCO in Afghanistan, with the economy and the care that country shows to its heritages, the governance of protection can come to a standstill.



Iran: Iran has 29 sites that are in the World Heritage List. But with the current conflicts between USA and Iran makes the protection of world heritages harder in both countries.

Indonesia: Indonesia has 10 World Heritage Sites. One of their sites: the Sumatra Tropical Rainforest Heritage Site is listed as an endangered heritage site due to reasons such as illegal logging and agricultural expansion.





Kenya: Kenya has eight World Heritage Sites.

One of their sites; Turkana Lake National Park, is listed as an endangered heritage site mainly due to dam projects. And this shows that the country is not qualified or not gives enough attention on protecting the heritages.

France: France accepted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1975, after which it could nominate properties on their territory to be considered for the World Heritage List. As of 2025, 54 properties in France are inscribed on the World Heritage List. With 54 World Heritage Sites, France ranks fourth worldwide by number of sites.



Italy: Italy is the country with the largest number of UNESCO sites in the world. It has 61 declared assets. 55 of their sites are cultural and 6 are natural.

Germany: Germany ratified the UNESCO World Heritage Convention—West Germany in August 1976 and East Germany in December 1988, unified under one party in October 1990. Germany has 55 sites on the list, with a further seven on the tentative list. Three sites are natural and 52 are listed for their cultural significance. Germany also holds the third highest number of World Heritage Sites in the world



China: There are 60 World Heritage sites in China, including 41 cultural sites, 15 natural sites, and 4 sites that are both cultural and natural. With this number of heritages China has the second most listed world heritages.



Chad: Chad has two sites on the World Heritage list. The first property listed in Chad were the Lakes of Ounianga, which are a natural site, in 2012. In 2016, Ennedi Massif: Natural and Cultural Landscape was listed as a mixed World Heritage Site. In addition to the sites inscribed on the World Heritage list, member states can maintain a list of tentative sites that they may consider for nomination. Nominations for the World Heritage list are only accepted if the site was previously listed on the tentative list. Chad lists seven properties on its tentative list.



Niger: There are three World Heritage Sites in Niger. The W-Arly-Pendjari Complex is shared with Benin and Burkina Faso. The Air and Ténéré National Nature Reserve has been listed as endangered since 1992 because of political instability in the region; it is also the largest protected area in Africa. The Historic Centre of Agadez is a cultural site, the other two are listed for their natural significance. Niger has served on the World Heritage Committee once.

Papua New Guinea: Papua New Guinea accepted the convention on 28 July 1997. Responsibility for managing any sites was assigned to the Department of Environment and Conservation in 2005. The country's single World Heritage Site, the Kuk Early Agricultural Site, was inscribed as a cultural site in 2008. Seven sites have been included on the tentative list since 2006. A 2015 review of the tentative sites found that only four had well-defined boundaries, and that protective measures in all tentative sites had not significantly progressed since 2006. Only the Trans-Fly Complex site was considered ready for a formal nomination, and of the others only the Huon Terraces site could be easily readied for such a nomination.



5. Useful Resources:

UNESCO Official Website: Provides detailed information about World Heritage Sites, member states and UNESCO's mission.

(<https://www.unesco.org/en>)

The 1972 World Heritage Convention: The convention is a signed document of international agreement. It guides the work of the World Heritage Committee. It defines which sites can be considered to take place on the World Heritage Sites list.

(<https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>)

World Heritage List: Contains all of the World Heritage Sites and allows comparison between countries and regions.

(<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>)

World Heritage Tentative Lists: States Parties are required to submit their Tentative Lists, which identify sites they consider to be cultural and/or natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value and therefore suitable for potential inscription on the World Heritage List.

(<https://www.unesco.org.tr/Pages/659/314/UNESCO->)

The 1994 UNESCO Global Strategy: It aims that the World Heritage List reflects the world's cultural and natural diversity of outstanding universal value.

(<https://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy/>)

Reports on Endangered World Heritage Sites: This will help you provide insights into current threats such as climate change, conflicts and lack of fundings.

(<https://whc.unesco.org/en/danger-list/>)



6. Questions A Resolution Must Answer (QARMA):

1. How can UNESCO ensure a more balanced geographical distribution on the World Heritage List?
2. What can countries do to raise awareness among young people about the value of World Heritage sites in their own countries and to foster a sense of conservation?
3. How can UNESCO remain neutral and effective when member states withdraw or reduce their engagement?
4. Should UNESCO have a limitation on how many sites a single country can have in order to ensure a more balanced global representation?
5. How does climate change threaten heritage sites in underrepresented regions?
6. Should priority in the World Heritage List be given to endangered sites in underrepresented regions?
7. How can UNESCO provide better protection of World Heritage Sites in conflict zones?
8. Should more financial and technical support be provided to developing countries to help them nominate and protect their heritage sites?



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