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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC  
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF  
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

**Extended forty-fourth session**

**Fuzhou (China) / Online meeting  
16-31 July 2021**

**Item 7B of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of properties  
inscribed on the World Heritage List**

**SUMMARY**

This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Committee is requested to review the reports on the state of conservation of properties contained in this document. The full reports of Reactive Monitoring missions requested by the World Heritage Committee are available at the following Web address in their original language: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/44COM/documents>

All previous state of conservation reports will be available through the World Heritage State of conservation Information System at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>

**Decision required:** The World Heritage Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision presented at the end of each state of conservation report.

### **113. Galapagos Islands (Ecuador) (N 1bis)**

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1978

Criteria (vii)(viii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2007-2010

Previous Committee Decisions see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1/documents/>

#### International Assistance

Requests approved: 26 (from 1979-2019)

Total amount approved: USD 627,825

For details, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1/assistance/>

### UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 3.5 million for the capitalization of an introduced species Trust Fund, management of introduced species, tourism management studies and other technical support

### Previous monitoring missions

June 1996: Joint UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission (including World Heritage Committee Chairperson); February 2003: UNESCO mission; June 2003: UNESCO mission; April 2005: UNESCO informal visit; February-March 2006: Joint UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2007: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission (including World Heritage Committee Chairperson); April 2009: UNESCO informal visit; April-May 2010: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; August 2017: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

### Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Fishing/collecting aquatic resources (illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing / collection of aquatic resources)
- Legal framework (inadequate implementation of the Special Law on Galápagos)
- Governance
- Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community (high immigration rate)
- Illegal activities
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation
- Invasive Alien Species / biosecurity (inadequate and ineffective quarantine measures)
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure

Illustrative material see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1/>

### Current conservation issues

On 27 December 2019, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1/documents/>, providing the following information:

- The 10-year Galápagos Invasive Species Management Plan was released in February 2019;
- The Galápagos Biosecurity Laboratory was opened, which will strengthen the identification and eradication of pests and diseases, as well as related research and education. The USD 20 million Invasive Species Fund was reactivated, funding seven projects in 2019. A manual was produced to control pests in urban zones of the islands;
- Prevention and quarantine control actions have improved in recent years and the Directorate of the Galápagos Biosecurity and Quarantine Regulation and Control Agency (GBA) has increased air and maritime transportation vessel inspections. Other actions include port design improvements, securing funding for cargo operation systems and the review of quarantine and fumigation processes;
- Tourist visitation has increased although the rate of acceleration has slowed. Whilst cruise ship tourism has remained fairly constant over the past decade, land-based tourism and flights to Baltra and San Cristóbal have increased substantially. Accommodation numbers are now fixed to 317 and the construction of new tourist accommodation infrastructure is prohibited;
- In 2018, the crews of two fishing vessels were sentenced for possessing and transporting protected species;
- Conservation initiatives of the Galápagos National Park Directorate (GNPD) include, amongst others, training of scuba diving guides, initiation of a giant tortoise captive breeding programme, and discovery of hammerhead shark nursery sites;
- A new five-year plan of action has been approved to optimise management effectiveness in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR). In 2018, an Agreement was signed with the Republic of Costa Rica to share tools for conservation and management of the Galápagos Islands and Cocos Island National Park properties;
- The GNPD has been renewing artisanal fishing licenses and surveying catch. A ban on sea cucumber fishing and restrictions on spiny lobster fishing until stocks have recovered have been introduced. An investment plan is being developed for tuna fishing in the Galápagos Marine

Reserve (GMR) with the hope this will aid financing to improve the management and commercialisation system of tuna fishing in the Galápagos;

- The new Zoning Plan for the Special Status Region of Galápagos was approved in June 2018. This aims to consolidate settlements within the intensive urban limits and develop buffer zones between the populated areas and protected areas.

On 30 July 2020, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party regarding reported fishing activities by a large number of foreign vessels from diverse nationalities in close proximity of the property.

On 16 September 2020, the State Party submitted additional information about the possible impact on the biodiversity of the Galápagos Islands due to the presence of a fleet of foreign-flagged fishing vessels in the area near the State Party's Exclusive Economic Zone from July to the end of August 2020, confirming that excessive fishing, even at a considerable distance from the Galápagos Islands, could have an impact on the property's ecosystems. The State Party also considers that there is an urgent need to increase scientific research on biodiversity in general and the impacts of fishing near the property in particular.

On 5 November 2020, the State Party submitted additional information, providing a copy of the "Joint Declaration by the Foreign Affairs Ministries of the Republic of Chile, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Ecuador and the Republic of Peru" regarding fishing by foreign vessels in the areas adjacent to the waters under the jurisdiction of each country. The Declaration expresses the intent of these States Parties to take actions to jointly address the issue of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, which threatens conservation and sustainable use of marine resources in the areas beyond their national jurisdiction.

#### *Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN*

The continued efforts by the State Party to address the Committee's requests and the recommendations of the 2017 IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission are welcomed.

Regarding biosecurity, it is welcomed that the State Party has initiated a new 10-year Invasive Species Management Plan, improving coordination and efficiency of biosecurity, food sovereignty and introduced species management, as well as opening the Galápagos Biosecurity Laboratory to strengthen capacities for pest control. Furthermore, the State Party has increased vessel inspections and improved cargo logistics systems, and the reported decrease in alien species and pest-infested product confiscations is noted. It is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to address all remaining recommendations on biosecurity of the 2017 mission, to rigorously ensure that biosecurity measures are followed and fully funded, and that vessels, equipment and facilities continue to be improved to control and limit invasions of alien species and pests.

The continued growth of tourism to the property is a significant concern, with an approximate 25% increase reported in tourism between 2016 and 2018 and a substantial increase in commercial flights in 2017-2018. The State Party, in its previous report, committed to adopt measures that promote a zero-growth model for tourism, as recommended by the 2017 mission. In view of this, it is also recommended that the Committee request the State Party to develop and implement a clear action plan with urgent measures to limit the number of tourists and flights to the property to achieve the zero growth model in line with its commitment.

The reinforcement of GNPD and its overall significant progress to control, protect, conserve and enhance the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) are welcomed. The approval of the Galápagos Zoning Plan in June 2018 is noted, as well as the intention to develop buffer zones between populated and protected areas. The State Party should be commended for its increased marine control and surveillance operations, as well as the prosecution of vessels possessing and transporting protected species. The agreements signed between GNPD and the Ecuadorian Navy, as well as with the National System of Protected Conservation Areas of the Republic of Costa Rica to protect the Galápagos Islands and Cocos Island National Park properties are noted with appreciation. Furthermore, the Joint Declaration by the States Parties of Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru expressing the intent to jointly address the issue of IUU fishing in areas adjacent to their territorial waters is welcomed. However, IUU fishing in and around the property continues to represent a significant threat to its OUV, as was evidenced by the presence of a large fishing fleet from other States Parties in close proximity to the property in mid-2020. It is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to continue to further strengthen its collaboration and actions within the CMAR network as well as with other States Parties whose fishing vessels are illegally targeting migratory species that are part of the property's

OUV. It is further recommended that the Committee calls upon all States Parties to take all possible steps to ensure that fishing fleets operating under their flags do not impact the OUV of the property.

The prohibition of disposable plastic products and policies toward a plastic-free Galápagos are welcomed and it is recommended that the State Party be encouraged to pursue those efforts and share its results widely with other properties.

The reported intention to develop an investment plan related to tuna fishing is noted, however, it is recommended that the State Party be requested to provide clarification on its intentions regarding the commercialisation system of tuna fishing within the Galápagos, particularly concerning fishing regulations in the GMR, noting that commercial fishing is prohibited in the GMR.

### **Draft Decision: 44 COM 7B.113**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision 42 COM 7B.85 adopted at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018),
3. Welcomes the continued efforts by the State Party to address the Committee's previous requests and the recommendations of the 2017 IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, and requests the State Party to address all pending mission recommendations, in particular the recommendations related to biosecurity and to rigorously ensure that biosecurity measures are enforced and fully funded;
4. Also welcomes the efforts to make Galápagos plastic free, and encourages the State Party to pursue those efforts and to share its results widely with other properties;
5. Noting with serious concern the continued growth of tourism and commercial flights to the property, despite the commitment made by the State Party to promote a zero growth model for tourism, reiterates its requests to the State Party to develop and implement a clear tourism strategy that ensures that suitable measures are sustained in the long term as permanent regulations, with a clear action plan with urgent measures to achieve the zero growth model, including maintaining the moratorium on construction of new tourism projects and the limits on the number of flights, and to submit this strategy and action plan to the World Heritage Centre for review;
6. While noting the increased marine surveillance operations, reiterates its concern that ongoing illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing in and around the property continues to represent a threat to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), further welcomes the 2020 "Joint Declaration by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Ecuador and the Republic of Peru" expressing the intent of these States Parties to take actions to jointly address this issue and requests the State Party to continue to strengthen its collaboration and actions within the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor network as well as with other States Parties whose fishing vessels are illegally targeting migratory species that are part of the property's OUV;
7. Calls upon all States Parties to take all possible steps to ensure that fishing fleets operating under their flags do not impact the OUV of the property;
8. Also noting that an investment plan is being developed for yellow-fin tuna fishing within the Galápagos Marine Reserve (GMR) to attract funding to improve management and the commercialization system for tuna fishing in the Galápagos, also recalling that commercial fishing is prohibited in the GMR, requests furthermore the State Party to

*clarify its intentions regarding commercialisation, particularly concerning fishing regulations within the GMR;*

9. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2022**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session in 2023.*