

## **MISSION REPORT**

***Reactive Monitoring Mission to  
Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha,  
World Heritage Property, Nepal (13-18<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2005)***



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## **1. Executive Summary**

The Mission, carried out at the request of the WH Committee (Decision 29 COM 7B.55), assessed the state of conservation of the World Heritage property, with particular attention paid to the issues related to the recent construction of the Maya Devi temple, and the elaboration of a Management Plan. These two issues had raised the concern of the World Heritage Committee, which considered the negative impact of the new Temple as an indicator of inappropriate management of the site towards its Outstanding Universal Value.

The Mission confirmed this interpretation and identified a number of potential threats affecting the integrity and authenticity of the site, in the absence of a clear “vision” for the WH property. These threats concern the actual archaeological remains as well as the integrity of the landscape surrounding the sacred garden. As for the Temple, while its removal appears unrealistic, a number of specific and time-bound recommendations were made to avoid damage to the archaeological structures and to mitigate its negative impact on the appreciation of the heritage values of the site. More importantly, the Mission identified in the elaboration of a management Plan, of which a definition and scope of work were clarified for the benefit of the Nepalese authorities, the real priority for the site. The Mission recommended, indeed, that pending the completion of the Management Plan, all new developments, infrastructure and landscaping works be halted.

While the Mission recognized the strong commitment of the national authorities, and LDT in particular, to manage the site and implement the Master Plan of Kenzo Tange of 1979, it also noted how this Master Plan did not provide an adequate guidance for the conservation of the WH site, and should be therefore accordingly be reviewed.

Finally, the Mission noted with appreciation the readiness of the Nepalese authorities to consider its recommendations and continue collaborating with UNESCO for the safeguarding of the WH property of Lumbini, and wishes to express its deep gratitude to the Lumbini Development Trust, the Department of Archaeology and the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu for the assistance and cooperation extended throughout its stay in Nepal.

A complete set of recommendation, with a time-frame for implementation, are included in section 5 of the present report, as requested by the Committee. These were presented in writing to the Nepalese authorities on the last day of the Mission, in Lumbini and Kathmandu.

## **2. Background to the mission**

The Reactive Monitoring mission to Lumbini, subject of the present report, was carried out between 13 to 18 November 2005, upon request of the World Heritage Committee by its decision 29 COM 7B.55, adopted at its 29<sup>th</sup> session in July 2005 (Durban, South Africa). (See Annex 1)

The Mission team, composed of Mr Divay Gupta, ICOMOS expert, and Mr. Giovanni Boccardi, Chief of the Asia and Pacific Unit at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, looked in particular at two aspects:

- The issue of the new Maya Devi Temple and its impact on the values of the site
- The elaboration of a Management Plan for the World Heritage property.

These two issues had been the subject of several reports by ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, and the centre of many discussions within the Committee. In this regard, it may be useful to recall briefly the history of the construction of the new Temple, the main findings of the most recent missions to the site, as well as the relative recommendations by the World Heritage Committee.

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In 1997, Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, was inscribed on the World Heritage List, under cultural criteria (iii) and (vi). By then, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Maya Devi temple (see Annex 4 - photo N.1) had been removed, together with the imposing tree that grew on its structures, to enable the archaeological excavations conducted by the Japanese Buddhist Federation (JBF) during the 1990s (between 1992 and 1995). During the excavations, the ruins of the ancient phases of the temple, exposed to the elements (see Annex 4 - photo N.2), were covered by means of a temporarily shelter made of corrugated sheet. It is important to recall that it was during this archaeological campaign of the 1990s that the so-called “Marker Stone” (allegedly the stone where the Buddha first laid his foot) was found. Since then, the Marker Stone has been the subject of worship together with the image of the Maya Devi and the Ashoka Pillar bearing the inscription confirming Lumbini as the birth place of the Buddha.

In view of the growing number of pilgrims visiting the site, both the Lumbini Development Trust and JBF wished to adequately protect and present the ruins of the old Maya Devi Temple site as a matter of urgency. In 1998, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Seminar on Lumbini Development, attended by various international Buddhist institutions, discussed the revision of the Kenzo Tange Masterplan and stated the need for the construction of a new temple according to “archaeological norms and traditional ritual practice”. This wish by the international Buddhist community to have a new Maya Devi Temple was reiterated on various occasions.

After the inscription of Lumbini in the World Heritage List in 1997, UNESCO supported several missions of experts in order to guarantee that the conservation at the site would be carried out according to the international principles and standards. In this connection, in 2000 two missions, one of Coningham and Miliou, the other of Prof. Mughal, were sent to Nepal. The objectives were to evaluate the new temple projects proposed by the State Party to cover the archaeological remains of the Maya Devi Temple, and to identify possible strategies for the preservation of the site. The projects were all rejected because too massive and invasive, and it was suggested to keep the site as an open air.

In order to identify an agreed strategy for the preservation of the World Heritage Site, UNESCO supported the State Party in the organization of an “International Scientific Experts Meeting on Conservation, Restoration and Shelter for Excavated Archaeological Site of Maya Devi Temple”, which took place in April 2001. The Meeting finally concluded that no shelter should be provided but to the Alcove remains (the Nativity Sculpture and Marker Stone), where a light free-standing shelter should be set up. In July and September 2001 a new Mission was sent to Nepal in order to evaluate the conservation needs for the archaeological remains. The mission was carried out by Dr. Mahmud Bendakir, who stated that it was essential to keep a protective shelter over all or the archaeological remains of Maya Devi Temple. Based on this last statement, the State Party reconsidered the original plans for the Maya Devi Temple, and particularly the one from the Institute of Engineering of Tribhuvan University, which was adjusted according to eight essential criteria which were given by Bendakir in his report and which would be listed in accordance with the outcomes of the International Technical Meeting and with Coningham and Miliou’s Reactive Monitoring Mission to Lumbini in 2000.

While differing in the specific solutions offered, and notably on whether all or part of the archaeological remains should have been protected by a shelter, in general all UNESCO and ICOMOS experts were consistent in recommending a minimalist approach in the design of the new Temple. This was aimed to preserve the archaeological relics at the site and maintain the sense of sacredness and spiritual character associated to the figure of the Lord Buddha. In this regard, the terms pristine natural environment, sanctity, peace, harmony etc. were all mentioned, together with the need to give adequate consideration to the various rituals performed by the pilgrims.

In February 2002, the UNESCO Kathmandu Office informed the World Heritage Centre about new plans for the construction of a Temple at Lumbini. The design of the planned structure was eventually submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre via the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu in March 2002, and further forwarded to the Advisory Bodies. In the absence of an immediate answer from the World Heritage Centre (the Committee would have examined the

proposal only in June 2002), implementation at the site started anyway, under pressure from religious and political groups.

The Committee finally commented on the new Temple at its 26<sup>th</sup> session, in June 2002, expressing its serious concern over the “intrusive and heavy construction of the new Maya Devi Temple recently built over the archaeological remains within the core zone of Lumbini...” (Decision 26 COM 21 (b) 62) (see Annex 4 – photo N.3). At the same time, the Committee requested the State Party of Nepal to provide information on “existing conservation codes and management mechanisms applicable to the property” (Decision 26 COM 21 (b) 62), realising that the issue of the construction of the New temple was inscribed into a general management problem.

Considering that a further UNESCO/ICOMOS Monitoring Mission to Lumbini had been undertaken G. Wijesuriya and M. Bendakir in June 2002 (i.e. too late for the Committee to examine its findings), the Committee requested the authorities of Nepal to submit a report on the situation by February 2003 and decided to review the situation at its following session in July 2003.

The 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee (in July 2003) reiterated its concern for the impact of the new Temple, but could not examine the report of the State Party, since this was only submitted in January 2004. For this reason, the Committee requested a new monitoring mission to the site and a new report from the State Party by 1 February 2004.

In the report submitted by the Nepalese authorities in January 2004 (“Report on the Reconstruction of Maya Devi Temple”, elaborated by the Institute of Engineering Consultancy Service and Institute of Engineering), the State Party drew the attention of the Committee to some conflicting recommendations made by successive UNESCO/ICOMOS expert missions and justified the new construction by emphasizing the living character of the site, incessantly visited by devotees, whose religious sensitivity had been affected by the inappropriate conditions of the Marker Stone and image of Maya Devi (i.e. exposed under a temporary shelter). The State Party, moreover, stated that, in reconstructing the Temple, it had taken in full account the recommendations made at the 2001 UNESCO International Scientific Experts Meeting.

The report also indicated the provision of a management plan for the holy complex which included provisions for access control to the Temple, guidance and facilities for visitors, promotional activities, logging of weather record and security measures of the property. This plan, however, did not appear to be specifically aimed at conserving the site on the basis of the Outstanding Universal Value recognized at the time of inscription on the WH List.

The mission requested by the Committee at its 27<sup>th</sup> session, to assess the impact of the newly constructed Maya Devi Temple on the World Heritage value of the

property, took place in May 2004. The report confirmed the strong reservations expressed by the previous report elaborated by the mission of June 2002 (when the Temple was under construction), and provided several short-, mid- and long-term recommendations to mitigate the impact of the new construction. The report emphasized again the importance of establishing a comprehensive Management Plan for the World Heritage property.

Based on this report and on the report submitted by the State party, the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee (July 2004) requested the State Party (Decision 28 COM 15B.66) to “review the existing management protocols and elaborate a revised, comprehensive conservation and management plan...”, and inform the Committee of the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations of the 2004 UNESCO/ICOMOS Mission.

One year later, at 29<sup>th</sup> session in July 2005, the Committee examined a new report submitted by the State Party. This report reiterated the State Party’s view that the new Temple did not affect the authenticity and integrity of the property, considering that no foundations were dug to support the new building (existing trenches were used) and that the new structure, similar in shape to a previous one located on the same spot, was allegedly entirely reversible. However, it also expressed its full readiness to take into account the advice of UNESCO, and requested that the latter dispatch a further mission to the property (for a more detailed description of the contents of this report, please refer to Document WHC-05/29 COM 7B).

The report, however, showed a substantial lack of progress in implementing the recommendations made by the UNESCO/ICOMOS Mission of 2004, both for the mitigation of the impact of the new Maya Devi Temple and with respect to the Management Plan to be developed.

The Committee expressed again (Decision 29 COM 7B.55, herewith enclosed in full, in Annex 1) concern about the lack of significant progress in addressing the two issues, and requested “the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS to carry out a *new mission* to the property to define, in close consultation with the responsible authorities, definite solutions and concrete actions to address the above concerns, including a clear timetable for implementation, and report to the Committee on the outcome of the mission at its 30<sup>th</sup> Session in 2006”.

It also requested the State Party to “take urgent action, possibly through assistance from the World Heritage Fund, towards the elaboration of a comprehensive Management Plan for the property, built around its Outstanding Universal Value and in line with the principles set out in the recently revised *Operational Guidelines*”, and to “submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2006, a report on the progress made in the implementation of the above recommendation and the follow up to the recommendations of the new joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission to the property on the issue of the

Maya Devi Temple, for examination by the Committee at its 30<sup>th</sup> session in 2006”.

Finally, the Committee decided to consider the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List in Danger if “the above measures are not implemented by 1 February 2006”.

It is in this context that the mission whose report is herewith presented took place in November 2005.

It is important to note that the WHC/ICOMOS Mission took place only a few days after an important National Workshop on the safeguarding of Lumbini, organized by the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu in collaboration with the LDT and the Department of Archaeology (13-14 November 2005). In view of this Workshop, which was attended by approximately 30 participants, a number of very valuable thematic reports had been prepared, including on archaeology, religious issues, tourism, environment and management. While the conclusions of the Workshop were unfortunately not yet available during its visit to Lumbini (as well as at the time of writing of the present report), the Mission greatly benefited from the insights contained in these reports.

### **3. Legal and Institutional framework for the management of the property**

The Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) is in charge of the implementation of the 1978 Kenzo Tange Master Plan for the Development of Lumbini. The Trust is as well the national site manager of the Lumbini World Heritage Property. All management issues related to this property is centralized and coordinated by the Trust.

As for the legal aspect, LDT was officially constituted by the “*Lumbini Development Trust Act 2042* (1985)”. LDT is an autonomous, corporate and non-profit body. In its activities within the area of Lumbini, LDT is bound by the *Ancient Monuments Preservation Act* (1956) and later amendments, and is thus dependant of the Department of Archaeology for any work that may affect the archaeological remains.

The internal organization of the LDT is presently being revised. The current structure is presented in **Annex 2**.



#### 4. Assessment of the state of conservation of the World Heritage property

##### 4.1. Values and physical attributes

In order to comment on the state of conservation of the World heritage property, it is necessary first to review the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property, and the specific physical attributes that represent them.

The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage site of Lumbini is related to two fundamental aspects:

1. The historic significance of the archaeological remains;
2. The spiritual meaning associated to the figure and teaching of the Lord Buddha.

These two aspects were recognized by the World Heritage Committee at the time of the inscription of the site on the WH List, by the use of criteria (iii) and (vi). In the evaluation prepared by ICOMOS in 1997, the use of these two criteria was justified as follows:

*“The archaeological remains, although fragmentary, provide important evidence about the nature and intensity of the practices of Buddhist pilgrimage over nearly two thousand years (and now revived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century).”* (Criterion iii)

*“As the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, testified by the inscription on the Ashoka pillar, the sacred area in Lumbini is one of the most holy and significant places for one of the world’s great religions.”* (Criterion vi)

These two values are strictly related and equally important. For conservation and presentation purposes, the enhancement of one should not be made at the expense of the other.

To maintain the WH value of Lumbini, it is necessary to protect the tangible features and conditions (i.e. the *attributes*) that represent and embody the two above-mentioned aspects, i.e. the historic significance and spiritual meaning. It is therefore important to identify these particular tangible features and conditions in Lumbini, based on a deep understanding of the OUV of the site.

In the case of the historic significance, as clearly mentioned in the ICOMOS evaluation, these features consist mostly in the archaeological remains, both within the core area and in the buffer zone. However, much of this archaeological heritage, especially outside the fenced area, has not yet been identified and studied. Indeed, even the remains which have been excavated would require further study in order to clarify their chronology and interpretation. The objective of any conservation policy should be to identify the extent and significance of

these archaeological remains, ensure their protection and their interpretation for the benefit of the public and future generations.

As for the spiritual meaning (criterion vi), the definition of what specific tangible features best represent and embody it is less clear. The terms pristine natural environment, sanctity, peace, harmony, holiness etc. have been all used in the past, together with the various rituals performed by the pilgrims. However, a clear, shared vision of what sort of place would best convey the essence of the Buddhist spirituality has not been defined. Again, this should be done based on a full understanding of the OUV of the site.

#### **4.2. Main conservation issues: lack of conservation vision**

The LDT is fully committed to the implementation of the Master Plan of Kenzo Tange, and has achieved a great deal in this regard. LDT, which is undergoing a restructuring, does have a clear Work-Plan which is exposed in the premises of the organization and visible by everyone, and is making every effort to improve its effectiveness.

Despite this goodwill and determination, the lack of a shared understanding of the heritage values of the WH site, and of the specific physical features that embody them, exposes the site to the risk of inappropriate management. Indeed, in the present situation, each decision taken at the site has the potential to impact negatively on one set of values or the other, and sometimes even on both. Besides affecting the significance of the site, this is the cause for uncertainty and possible tensions among groups that advocate the priority of one set of values over the other.

The issue of the Maya Devi Temple is an example, or symptom, of this problem and of the possible resulting conflicts. The new Temple, built to respond to the demands of the worshippers, was indeed criticised by the World Heritage Committee for having a negative impact on the archaeological remains, for affecting the visual experience and understanding of the site (both with respect to its historic significance and spiritual meaning) and for not entirely conforming to the religious needs of the pilgrims. (See Annex 4 – photos 4 and 5).

It is important to stress that the use of the site, including by pilgrims, could have a negative impact on both values if it involves alteration of the tangible features that represent them. For this reason, all decisions on the site should be taken according to an agreed vision based on the OUV of the WH site. A piecemeal approach should be avoided.

In the past, on the contrary, most decisions have been taken on an *ad hoc* basis, in an attempt to respond to needs as they emerged and were perceived as

priorities, and under the general guidance of the Kenzo Tange Master Plan of 1979.

In fact, future decisions concerning new “improvements” may result in more conflicts and potential loss of Outstanding Universal value. For example, decisions in respect to the following areas may potentially have a negative impact on the OUV of the site:

- Provision of facilities for visitors and pilgrims, including space for prayer and meditation
- Infrastructure and road works
- Landscaping
- Security
- Conservation works

Indeed, at the time of the visit by the Mission, the LDT was apparently planning the erection of several meditation shelters around the Maya Devi temple, while two rows of Asoka pendent trees had recently been planted along the main north-south axis leading to the Ashoka pillar. These new elements were of course each justified by specific and legitimate reasons (the wish to draw attention to the pillar, and the need for protection from sun and rain for the pilgrims during the summer season), but they did not seem to conform with an overall vision of the site, compatible with the respect for the archaeological remains and the character of sacredness and natural integrity to be expected by the World heritage site of Lumbini. (See Annex 4 – photo N.6)

A specific, comprehensive vision for the WH site of Lumbini based on its OUV must therefore be defined in consultation with all concerned parties. Built upon this vision, a Management Plan for the World Heritage site should be elaborated, including clear policies with respect to all conservation issues. This has been requested by the WH Committee since inscription of Lumbini on the WH List.

In this context, and as far as the area of the WH site is concerned, the Master Plan of Kenzo Tange should be reviewed and, if appropriate, amended. The Master Plan of Kenzo Tange, conceived in 1978, was not primarily aimed at protecting the heritage significance of the site, based on its OUV (which was only defined in 1979), and therefore does not provide a sufficient guidance for its conservation. It is mainly an urban and landscape development plan.

For example, significant historic buildings such as the present Police Station and the premises of the Lumbini Development Trust, that the Kenzo Tange Master Plan had envisaged to demolish, might be re-used adaptively for activities related to the conservation and presentation of the site. On the other hand, the creation of a grid 80x80 meters and of a water levee around the sacred area might conflict with the need to preserve precious archaeological heritage. Decisions on these issues should be taken once a better understanding of the significance of the site

has been achieved through the process for the elaboration of the Management Plan.

Concerning the possible objectives and scope of work for the development of a Management Plan for the World Heritage site of Lumbini, see **Annex 3** (Definition and scope for a Management Plan in Lumbini).

#### **4.3. Other conservation issues**

One of the issues raised by the construction of the new Maya Devi Temple was the preservation of the archaeological remains contained inside, as a result of the special microclimate created by the building.

In this respect, the Mission observed that the ancient structures under the Temple are being heavily affected by moss and efflorescence, most likely due to water damp from the ground, incorrect temperature and relative humidity, combined with lack of adequate ventilation. The level of the water in the ground, as the temperature, are apparently subjected to extensive fluctuations throughout the year, thus increasing the intensity of the physical, chemical and biological processes affecting the materials within the Temple. The moss and efflorescence are generally cleaned periodically by coconut brushes but this may cause further erosion in the long run. The problem of moss and dampness is more pronounced towards the southern side of the building, and could be accentuated by the presence of the water pond and of the doorways. The Lumbini Development Trust has installed a data-logger near one of the two entrances to control environmental conditions. However, this monitoring system does not seem to have been set up with a clear strategy aimed at identifying the processes affecting the materials and determining the relative remedial measures. In this regard, the LDT seems to lack the necessary expertise. (See Annex 4 – photos 7 and 8)

Of particular concern is the so-called Marker Stone, which from a religious perspective is one of the most important findings of the recent excavations. This is kept *in situ*, under the new Temple. Due to its altitude, the stone is very close to the ground water, and it is thus constantly wet and exposed to potential rapid decay. Should a stabilization of the environmental conditions prove impossible, the possibility of preserving the Marker Stone in a 'controlled environment' should be given some consideration. If deemed appropriate, the Marker Stone could be replaced *in situ* by a replica, whereas the original would be transferred into a more adapted premise, in a location to be identified in the vicinity of the WH site, where it could be appropriately celebrated and worshipped according to Buddhist traditions. Such a measure, of course, would have to be taken in close consultation with the religious institutions concerned. (See Annex 4 – photo 9)

The new Temple itself faces already conservation problems (only three years after its construction) related to its poor design and quality of construction, and lack of maintenance. Skylights on the roof are designed without proper water outlets, resulting in water ingress during rains. Due to lack of maintenance some of the water outlets in the roof also get blocked and water seepage occurs over the archaeological remains. Some of the drainage pipes for rainwater disposal moreover, open directly over the archaeological remains at the exterior, thus pouring rain water from the rooftop in some of the archaeological structures, which are mostly made of burnt bricks and mud mortar. This needs to be corrected through appropriate rain water disposal design. No further improvements or developments were noticed on the site since the 2004 mission.

The Mission also considered the state of conservation of the remains outside the Maya Devi temple but within the fenced area, and those which are outside the fenced area but within the buffer zone. As already mentioned, much of this archaeological structures, especially outside the fenced area, has not yet been identified and studied, except for a quick survey carried out by Dr Coningham in 2001.

Many of the remains outside the Temple, but within the fence, are in the open and were found to be generally well preserved. However, the report prepared on the occasion of the UNESCO workshop of 13-14 November 2005 states that most of these remains are 'reconstructions' carried out during the past 100 years of archaeological campaigns at Lumbini. Some of the structures, in fact, were apparently backfilled but without any location reference and thus are untraceable now. These remains need to be presented in a way that would allow visitors and pilgrims alike to understand their context and significance, including by reviewing the stairs of the new Temple (see recommendations below).

The most threatened materials, however, are the archaeological remains outside the fenced area. These are yet to be excavated or even explored. The two most promising areas are just north of the fenced area and the zone to the south-west where the police station is currently located. No proper excavations have been attempted; however there is evidence of great potential from large concentration of surface archaeology (sections of walls, architectural elements and pottery) at both places.

Unfortunately, these remains are not adequately protected and at constant risk of being destroyed. Indeed, no bylaws exist currently to ensure the appropriate impact assessment of infrastructure works. For example, sections of large walls located right north of the fence, probably belonging to an ancient monastery, were exposed and severely damaged recently during the digging of a drainage trench, implemented according to the grid established in the Master Plan of Kenzo Tange. The mound where the police station is located, on the other hand, is considered to be the site of the original Lumbini village and has therefore great archaeological potential. The use of the site by the police constitutes already a

potential threat to the historic layers, but if the circular water levee is implemented as per Kenzo Tange's plan, part of this archaeological site would be lost forever. (See Annex 4 – photos 10, 11 and 12)

The other set of cultural features in this area are the buildings from Shamsheer Singh Rana's period, which though not related to the Buddhist aspect of the site are never the less related to its re-discovery and archaeological exploration chronology. One of this building is the LDT office and another the police station. Both these building offer reuse potential for activity related to the site like a documentation centre, site museum etc.

## **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

In conclusion, The Mission found that the negative impact due to the construction of the Maya Devi Temple was more a symptom of the real problem (i.e. the lack of a comprehensive conservation and management vision for the World Heritage property), than the problem itself. This lack of a vision constitutes the most important potential threat to the Outstanding Universal value of the site, as any new initiative or development might engender undesired negative effects (e.g. the meditation shelters, landscaping, completion of the water levee, drainage works, etc.).

The removal of the Temple, for the time being, seems unrealistic. On the other hand, if there were concerns for the integrity of the archaeological remains on the occasion of the construction of the new Temple, its demolition would most likely cause further damage. For this reason, a number of time-bound recommendations were made (see here below) to address urgent issues related to the conservation of the archaeological remains and mitigate the negative impact of the new building on the appreciation of the site.

More importantly, the Mission made specific recommendations to urgently develop the above-mentioned vision, through the elaboration of a Management Plan, of which the Mission clarified to the Nepalese authorities the purpose, scope and time frame for completion (within 2 years). The Mission, moreover, recommended to halt any new development within the core and buffer zones at the WH site, until completion of the Management Plan.

It is important to stress that the Management Plan which is required is different from the already existing and partially implemented 1978 Master Plan of Kenzo Tange. The latter deals with a much greater area beside the World Heritage property and is not aimed at conserving its Outstanding Universal Value. The Lumbini World Heritage site management Plan could however be seen as a component of the Master Plan of 1979, which in turn might have to be reviewed wherever its provisions conflict with the objectives of the WH site.

Considering the lack of specific expertise on heritage conservation and management within the LDT, the Mission also recommended that the State party request assistance through the World Heritage Fund or other source of funding to provide its staff with the necessary resources for the preparation of a Management Plan, including training opportunities.

It is hoped that this mission report will be helpful in better conservation of the World Heritage site of Lumbini, the Birth Place of Lord Buddha.

### ***Recommendations***

The recommendations of previous missions, including the WHC-ICOMOS mission of 2004, were reviewed in the light of the present situation. The Mission found that they should be replaced by new ones, which are described here below.

#### ***A. Management Plan***

The development of a Management Plan is the key action which is required. When this is done, all other actions will be integrated within it. To this end, the following actions are recommended:

1. LDT to formalise decision to start development of a Management Plan and set up a dedicated Task Force within LDT to ensure follow up; it is important that the LDT “owns” the process for the development of the Management Plan, so as to be able to implement it later on. This should happen within the next three months (by end February 2006);
2. Elaborate a Management Plan, based on the Outstanding Universal Value of the WH site and according to the principles set in the *Operational Guidelines*. This should be completed within the next two years (end 2007), for the consideration of the Committee at its 32<sup>nd</sup> session in 2008.

Examples of some important issues that the Management Plan should address include a landscaping vision that conveys the sense of sacredness of the place through the use of authentic, indigenous vegetation and traditional materials; guidelines and bylaws for impact assessment of infrastructure and landscaping works on archaeological remains; a research policy on the archaeological significance of the site; measures to rectify the negative impact of the new Maya Devi Temple on the heritage values of the WH site; and an effective monitoring system for environmental conditions within the Maya Devi Temple to orient conservation decisions.

## ***B. Recommended actions pending completion of the Management Plan***

Pending completion of the Management Plan, the following two types of actions are recommended:

- **Essential.** These actions concern actual threats to the state of conservation of the site which, if not addressed, can cause an irreversible loss of value. These actions should be undertaken within the next six months (by end May 2006);
- **Desirable.** Related mostly to the presentation and the experience of the site, these actions address issues that do not involve a potential irreversible loss of value. They might be implemented as soon as practical, and in any case within the next two years (by November 2007).

### **Essential actions**

1. Execute proposed small openings in the outer wall below gallery level to improve ventilation at Maya Devi Temple in phased manner, ensuring that these openings will not allow water or pests inside the Temple and are easily maintainable. Implementation of successive stages will depend on results of monitoring (see point 2 below);
2. Establishment of a monitoring system and conservation protocol within the Temple, to record the changes in the parameters affecting the development of biological attack and salt efflorescence on the structures (temperature, relative humidity, ground water levels and dampness of soil) including the identification of appropriate benchmarks to orient conservation actions. Such a Monitoring system should be based on a baseline survey of the present state of conservation of the archaeological structure, sufficiently detailed to enable the observation of changes due to the above-mentioned factors. This action should be implemented under the supervision of a qualified materials' conservator. The Management Plan to be elaborated should integrate this process within its policies and procedures.
3. Ensure waterproofing of the Maya Devi Temple to avoid leakages and establish maintenance protocol;
4. Stop all new constructions, including shelters or gazebos, in both core and buffer zones; Core and buffer zones should be declared no-construction areas; Prayer and meditation space should be provided under existing trees by means of removable timber platforms or mats. Occasionally, removable tents can be installed around the Temple during summer months, if need arises;
5. Do not plant any trees and do not carry out landscaping works or other activities to implement the Kenzo Tange Master Plan, such as the completion of the water levee or the 80x80 grid, within core and



buffer zones until a clear vision has been established, through the Management Plan. Upon completion of the Management Plan, moreover, the two rows of Asoka pendent trees recently planted on the sides of the northern access and leading to the Ashoka Pillar might have to be removed, if incompatible with the agreed vision for the landscaping around the Temple;

6. Subject all future infrastructure works (e.g. trenches for drainage, cabling and pipes, roads, etc.) to archaeological impact assessment and ensure continuous presence of an archaeologist during execution of works; All findings during works should be documented according to appropriate archaeological standards.

### **Desirable actions**

1. Removal of false ceiling inside Maya Devi Temple and replace it with natural materials such as plywood of Bamboo, or fabric. This could be inserted inside the metal structure and raise the level of the ceiling of some 25 cm;
2. Redesign of staircases of Maya Devi Temple. On north façade, staircase should be removed to enable view of group of six Stupas. Ramp could be re-aligned along wall. Steps leading to door at lower level could be removed. Upon completion of the Management Plan, if deemed appropriate, access to the roof of the Temple could be restricted to maintenance only and all staircases removed;
3. Review of the railings of the roof of Maya Devi Temple. If access to the roof of the Temple is restricted to maintenance only, railings could be removed altogether, thus reducing the visual impact of the new Temple;
4. Re-fixing of old decorative copper ceiling against false ceiling over Maya Devi image;
5. If deemed appropriate, on the basis of the results of the monitoring, the removal of sections of the outer wall of the Maya Devi, especially towards the west (Ashoka Pillar), might be considered. These could be replaced by grids in natural materials (wood, or bricks). A system should be devised to prevent rainwater, dust and animals from getting into the Temple;
6. Conduct non-destructive archaeological surveys in core and buffer zones to increase understanding of the site, and document any finding in view of future integration in GIS;
7. Improve the existing documentation system of LDT by collecting and cataloguing all cartography available on Lumbini, all documents related to previous excavations at the site, a data-base related to all materials from previous excavations and all other publications and reports concerning the site and its conservation.

This documentation should be made accessible to researchers and interested persons.

### ***C. Capacity building and possible external assistance***

The Mission recognized the great commitment and professionalism of the LDT in implementing the Master Plan for Lumbini. However, it also noted its limited financial and human resources. Considering moreover the fact that, despite the significant experience accumulated over the years in conservation works in the country, a Management Plan for a World Heritage site has never been prepared in Nepal, and that the current staff of LDT do not have a specific expertise in heritage conservation and management, possible external assistance might be useful to help LDT in implementing the above recommended actions.

The Mission recommends in particular that the Task Force to be established within the LDT to coordinate the elaboration of the Management Plan receive some essential training to familiarize itself with the current international concepts and methodologies for the management and conservation of World Heritage sites. In the long-term, LDT will have to establish its own permanent expertise in heritage management and conservation.

In this respect, UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre are ready to provide financial and technical assistance, according to provisions of WH Convention, if requested by Nepal.

## **6. Acknowledgments**

The WHC-ICOMOS Mission expresses its appreciation to the LDT for the full cooperation received during its stay in Lumbini, as well as for the work accomplished by LDT in relation to the implementation of the Master Plan. The Mission also noted with satisfaction the recent promising developments in the working methods and internal organization of the LDT.

The Mission is also very thankful to the Department of Archaeology of Nepal (DOA) for its continuous support and technical cooperation in Kathmandu and Lumbini.

Finally, the Mission wish to acknowledge the great support received by the Head and staff of the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu. Special thanks should go also to the authors of the thematic reports prepared in the context of the Workshop on Lumbini which took place on 13 and 14 November 2005, for their precious contribution to the understanding of the site.

## Annex 1. Decision 29 COM 7B.55

### Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha (Nepal) (C 666)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document **WHC-05/29.COM/7B.Rev**,
2. Recalling its Decision **28 COM 15B.66**, adopted at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004),
3. Reiterating its serious concern about the lack of significant progress in addressing the recommendations of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Mission of 2004 to reverse the negative impact of the new Maya Devi Temple on the integrity and authenticity of the property,
4. Requests the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS to carry out a new joint mission to the property to define, in close consultation with the responsible authorities, definite solutions and concrete actions to address the above concerns, including a clear timetable for implementation, and report to the Committee on the outcome of the mission at its 30th Session (Vilnius, 2006);
5. Also requests the State Party of Nepal to take urgent action, possibly through assistance from the World Heritage Fund, towards the elaboration of a comprehensive management plan for the property, built around its outstanding universal value and in line with the principles set out in the *Operational Guidelines* (paragraphs 96-119);
6. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2006**, a report on the progress made in the implementation of the above recommendations, including the recommendations of the joint mission World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS of 2004, and the follow up to the recommendations of the new joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission to the property on the issue of the Maya Devi Temple, for examination by the Committee at its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006).
7. Decides to consider the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger if the above mentioned measures are not implemented by 1 February 2006.

## Annex 2. Structure of the Lumbini Development Trust (December 2005)

### Patron

-His Majesty the King of Nepal-

### Lumbini Development Council

### Lumbini Development Trust Executive Board

### Chairman

-Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation-

↓

### Vice Chairman

-Political assignment-

### Treasurer

### Member Secretary

-Political assignment

### Project manager

-Political assignment

Divisions (technical offices):

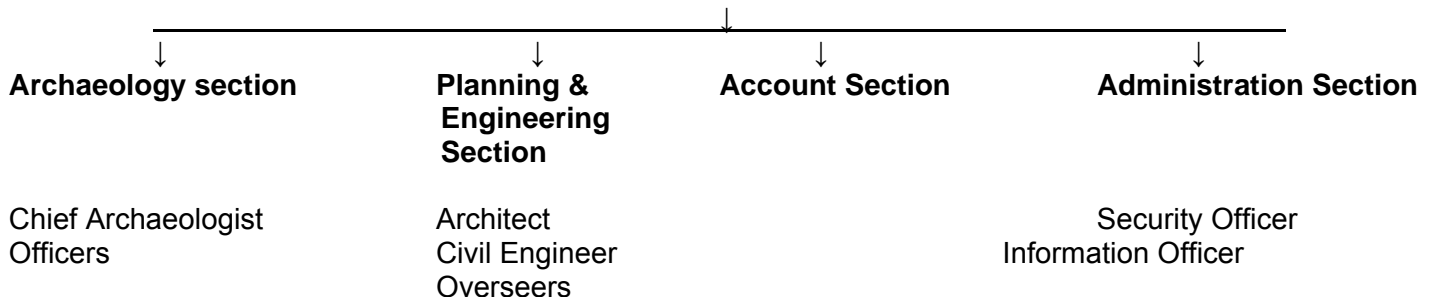
**Division of Planning, Construction and Forest Garden** (in Lumbini) *(No head at the moment; 1 architect, 1 civil engineer, 2 assistant engineers)*

**Division of Archaeology** (in Lumbini) *(Head: Mr Basanta Bidari; 2 archaeological officers, 1 conservation officer, 1 photographer, other assistance staff)*

**Division of Administration and Management** (in Lumbini) *(Head: Mr Gyanin Rai; 7 professionals in information-1 officer + 4 tourist guides + 2 assistants, 35 professionals/guards in security)*

**Financial Administration and Procurement Division** (in Lumbini) *(Head: Mr Ram Bahadur KC; 2/3 assistants)*

Liason Office in Kathmandu



### Annex 3. Definition and scope for a Management Plan in Lumbini

#### What is a Management Plan?

With an aim to clarify to the Nepalese authorities the scope of the work involved by the request of the World Heritage Committee, the Mission thought appropriate to define what is intended, in the context of World Heritage and for Lumbini in particular, with the development of a Management Plan.

Typically, a Management Plan is a document which describes the site, its heritage values, conservation issues, long-term vision for its conservation and presentation, as well as specific policies and procedures, with a distribution of responsibilities, to accomplish this vision. It normally includes a description of indicators and a well conceived monitoring system to measure progress towards the set objectives. These indicators should refer to the state of conservation of those features that represent the OUV of the site, as well as to the extent to which the public is benefiting from the heritage resource. Ample documentation on the site (cartography, photographs, documentation of archaeological excavations, bibliography, etc.) should be annexed to the Management Plan. The establishment of a GIS is highly recommended.

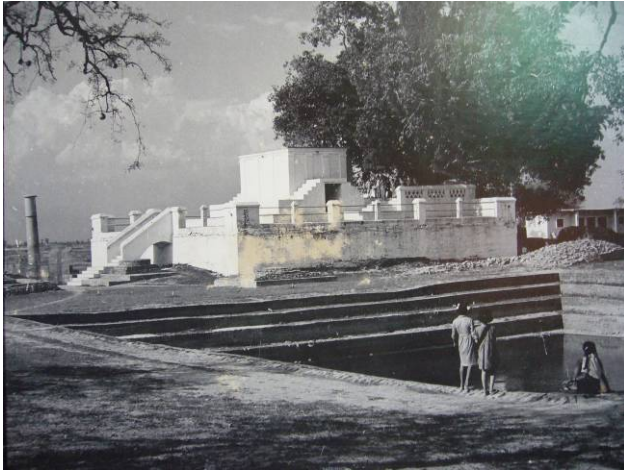
The main purpose of a Management Plan is to organize the work of the management authority of a site, and give it sense and long-term orientation for the conservation of the property. This sense and orientation should be grounded on the OUV of the WH site, as recognized by the World Heritage Committee. A Management Plan, therefore, is not a simple action plan of limited scope in time, but rather the description of a system, or process, oriented towards the achievement of an objective, i.e. the conservation of the OUV of the site. Many of the benefits of a Management Plan derive from the changes made in the strategy, policies and procedures, as well as capacity of the managing authority (i.e. LDT) during its elaboration.

It is important to clarify that the Management Plan is distinct from the Master Plan of Kenzo Tange. The Management Plan for the WH site could indeed be seen as a component of the Kenzo Tange Master Plan, specifically aimed at the World Heritage area and its buffer zone. However, the specific objectives of the Management Plan might require a review of the provisions of the Master Plan, whereby decisions outside the WH area and its buffer zone may have an impact on the OUV of the WH site. The Management Plan should become the main reference for the work of the LDT for the WH site, both for the daily operations of the staff and for its long term objectives. It should be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, amended.

LDT, as the managing authority in Lumbini, is responsible for the elaboration and implementation of the Management Plan. However, the elaboration of the Management Plan should be a consultative process involving all concerned parties, including local authorities and communities, national authorities and international Organizations. The Management Plan should also be a basic tool to coordinate and focus the work of various governmental agencies whose mandate may have an impact on the site towards its conservation. Currently, LDT does coordinate its activities with other concerned authorities. However, this coordination is not oriented towards any particular long-term vision for the conservation and presentation of the WH site.

For these reasons, a Management Plan should be a public document, easily accessible, that informs people about the policy of the management authority for the conservation and presentation of the site. An executive summary should be made available in local languages and publicised.

**Annex 4. Photographs**



**1. Maya Devi Temple before JBF excavations**



**2. Ruins exposed after JBF excavations**



**3. The new Maya Devi Temple built in 2002**



**4. The visual and functional connection between the Maya Devi Temple and the Ashoka Pillar (see photo N.1) has been affected**



**5. The new stairs prevent the full appreciation of the row of six stupas**



**6. The landscaping of the garden around the Maya Devi Temple does not seem to be related to the layout of the archaeological remains or to a “vision” for the birth-place of the Lord Buddha**





**7. The Maya Devi Temple protects the ancient remains from rain and excessive temperature fluctuation, but the new microclimate created poses some conservation challenges.**



**8. Moss and efflorescence from water in the ground**



**9. The so-called “Marker Stone”, is affected by rising damp**





**10. Important archaeological structures (a Vihara?) outside the core area were damaged by the digging of a drainage trench. The current boundaries of the WH core area must be reviewed**



**11. The site of the Police Station is the probable location of the ancient village of Lumbini**



**12. Evidence of rich archaeological deposits in the area of the Police Station**

**Annex 5. List of persons met**

**Mr Kosh P. Acharya (DOA)**

**Mr Sukra Sagar Shrestha (DOA)**

**Mr Govinda Chitrakar (LDT)**

**Mr Gyanin Rai (LDT)**

**Mr Soroj Bhattarai (LDT)**

**Hon. Min. Buddhi Raj Bajracharya**

**Annex 6. Programme of the Mission (13 – 18 November 2005)**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Sun, 13 Nov | <p>13.15: Arrival in Kathmandu. Pick up at the airport and drop off at Hotel Yak and Yeti (UNESCO car)<br/>                     16.00: Pick up at Hotel Yak and Yeti (UNESCO car)<br/>                     16.30: Meeting with DoA<br/>                     17.30: Briefing with UNESCO Kathmandu about the site</p>  |
| Mon, 14 Nov | <p>07.50: Pick up at Hotel Yak and Yeti (UNESCO car)<br/>                     8.20: Drop off at the airport<br/>                     09.20: Flight to Bhairawa<br/>                     10.05: Arrival in Bhairawa (pick up by Hotel car)<br/>                     11.15: Arrival in Lumbini (pick up: Hotel car)<br/>                     13.00: Meeting with LDT Staff at LDT Office and Site visit to the WHS with LDT staff<br/>                     16.30 – 17.30/18.00: Visit to the Master Plan Area</p> |
| Tue, 15 Nov | <p>10.30 onwards: Meeting with LDT and DoA at LDT Office and further visit to the site with the local authorities, if necessary<br/><br/>                     Evening: Joint report-writing by ICOMOS/WHC</p>   |
| Wed, 16 Nov | <p>Morning: Joint report-writing by ICOMOS/WHC<br/><br/>                     11.00: Meeting with LDT and DoA at LDT Office for conclusive discussion on actions required at the site<br/>                     15.30: Departure from Lumbini<br/>                     17.05: Flight from Bhairawa Airport<br/>                     17.40: Arrival in Kathmandu (pick up: UNESCO car)<br/>                     18.30: Dinner at Ms Kanno's house</p>  |
| Thu, 17 Nov | <p>Morning: necessary joint report-writing by ICOMOS/WHC and site-visit<br/><br/>                     11.45: Pick up at Hotel Yank and Yeti (UNESCO car)<br/>                     13.00: Meeting with Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation<br/>                     14.00: Courtesy meeting with NatCom Nepal<br/>                     15.30: Meeting with DoA<br/>                     18.00: Drop off at Hotel Yak and Yeti (UNESCO car)</p>   |
| Fri, 18 Nov | <p>9.30: Pick up at Hotel Yak and Yeti (UNESCO car)<br/>                     10.00: Debriefing with UNESCO Kathmandu<br/>                     11.30: Departure from UNESCO Office (UNESCO car)</p>  |