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CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DU PATRIMOINE  
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**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda:** State of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and/or on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

**Point 7 de l'Ordre du jour provisoire:** Etat de conservation de biens inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et/ou sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril

MISSION REPORT / RAPPORT DE MISSION

Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley  
(Afghanistan) (C 208 rev)

Paysage culturel et vestiges archéologiques de la vallée de Bamiyan  
(Afghanistan) (C 208 rev)

19 to 27 November 2010 & 30 March to 7 April 2011

This mission report should be read in conjunction with Document:  
Ce rapport de mission doit être lu conjointement avec le document suivant:

WHC-11/35.COM/7A.Add

**REPORT ON THE ADVISORY MISSION TO  
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF  
THE BAMIYAN VALLEY, (AFGHANISTAN)**

FROM 19 TO 27 NOVEMBER (2010) & FROM 30 MARCH TO 7 APRIL (2011)



28 April 2011

Roland Lin (World Heritage Centre), Andrea Bruno (ICCROM), Jukka. Jokilehto (ICOMOS)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. BACKGROUND OF THE MISSION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Inscription .....	5
Justification of the Mission.....	7
<b>II. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>III. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>IV. IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT OF CHALLENGES .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Management and Control of Urban Development; .....	13
2. Mitigating the structural problems and the impact of weather on fragile heritage sites;.....	13
3. Defining and protecting the entire cultural landscape area; .....	13
4. Capacity building;.....	14
5. Preparation of a comprehensive policy for the presentation and interpretation. ....	14
<b>V. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Outcome of the Ninth Expert Working Group Meeting in Paris, 3-4 March 2011.....	14
Ensuring site security:.....	15
Ensure long-term stability of the Giant Buddha niches by installing a permanent monitoring system:.....	16
Ensure adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings: .....	16
Implement the Management Plan and the Cultural Master Plan:.....	16
<b>VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Annex 1: Terms of reference .....	20
Annex 2: Notes on the Meetings and consultation with national authorities and stakeholders.....	22
ANNEX 3: List and Contact Details of People met.....	23

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report concerns a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory Mission carried out in November 2010 and in April 2011 to the property of the “**Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley**”, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2003. The Mission aimed to assist the State Party of Afghanistan in identifying the long-term solutions for the conservation and presentation of the Buddha niches of the Bamiyan World Heritage property and to provide advice for the priority measures required.

The members of the Mission, after visiting the site and having consulted the National and Local authorities came to a series of conclusions concerning the conservation of the Buddha niches and proposed presentation policy. The first part of these conclusions concerned the description and evaluation of the site’s current state of conservation, and the technical measures for its maintenance and conservation. Subsequently, a series of suggestions have been made for guidelines to be followed in relation to a long-term solution for the presentation of the Buddha niches.

The tragic destruction of the Buddha statues makes part of the property’s history, and is recognized in the application of criterion (vi) for its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);

The current on-going consolidation and conservation of the Bamiyan Cliff and the other Buddhist sites should be continued and completed;

A comprehensive proposal for the representation and interpretation of the World Heritage property should be prepared, indicating the limits of eventual restoration, the development of site museums and visitor facilities;

The capacity building of the local authorities in the conservation and management of the cultural landscape and historical and archaeological remains of Bamiyan should be continued according to comprehensive policy and strategy;

The wider cultural landscape of Bamiyan Valley should be formally defined as a buffer zone to the World Heritage property, including appropriate protection and development control mechanisms.

## I. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

### Inscription

The property of the “Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley” was inscribed on the World Heritage List and simultaneously placed at the World Heritage List in Danger, in July 2003 under criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi) (Decision 27 COM 8C.43 of the World Heritage Committee) :

**Criterion i:** *The Buddha statues and the cave art in Bamiyan Valley are an outstanding representation of the Gandharan school in Buddhist art in the Central Asian region.*

**Criterion ii:** *The artistic and architectural remains of Bamiyan Valley, and an important Buddhist centre on the Silk Road, are an exceptional testimony to the interchange of Indian, Hellenistic, Roman, Sasanian influences, as the basis for the development of a particular artistic expression in the Gandharan school. To this can be added the Islamic influence in a later period.*

**Criterion iii:** *The Bamiyan Valley bears an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition in the Central Asian region, which has disappeared.*

**Criterion iv:** *The Bamiyan Valley is an outstanding example of a cultural landscape which illustrates a significant period in Buddhism.*

**Criterion vi:** *The Bamiyan Valley is the most monumental expression of the western Buddhism. It was an important centre of pilgrimage over many centuries. Due to their symbolic values, the monuments have suffered at different times of their existence, including the deliberate destruction in 2001, which shook the whole world.*

At the 31st Session of the World Heritage Committee, Christchurch 2007, (WHC-07/31.COM/7A.21), the Committee adopted the Desired State of Conservation of the property in view of its removal from the List in Danger:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-07/31.COM/7A,
2. Recalling Decision **30 COM 7A.23**, adopted at its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006),
3. Notes with satisfaction the efforts and commitment of the State Party and the international community for the safeguarding of this property;
4. Adopts the following as the desired state of conservation for the property in view of its future removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger:
  - a) ensured site security,
  - b) ensured long-term stability of the Giant Buddha niches,
  - c) adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings, and
  - d) implemented Management Plan and Cultural Master Plan (the protective zoning plan);
5. Encourages the State Party to implement corrective measures for:
  - a) ensured site security by

- (i) exerting strict control of illicit excavations and looting through hiring of adequate number of trained site guards, and
    - (ii) clearing unexploded ordinances and anti-personnel mines from the property;
  - b) ensured long-term stability of the Giant Buddha niches by installing a permanent monitoring system;
  - c) adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings by
    - (i) completing the conservation of the fragments of the Giant Buddha statues and
    - (ii) completing the conservation of the mural paintings in the prioritized buddhist caves;
  - d) the Management Plan and the Cultural Master Plan (the protective zoning plan) both implemented by developing institutional capacity, notably for the Ministry of Culture and the intersectoral Bamiyan Cultural Landscape Coordination Committee (BCLCC);
6. Invites the international community to continue its technical and financial support, in particular to achieve the above indicated desired state of conservation;
  7. Requests the State Party, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to develop a draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, including the conditions of integrity and authenticity, for examination by the Committee at its 32nd session in 2008;
  8. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by **1 February 2008** the Management Plan and a progress report on the implementation of corrective measures, for examination by the Committee at its 32nd session in 2008; and
  9. **Decides to retain the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

At its 34th Session, the World Heritage Committee, Brasilia 2010 (WHC-10/34.COM/7A.23), the Committee decided to retain the property on the List in Danger, asking the State Party for a State of Conservation report by 1 February 2011, which was duly provided.

## Justification of the Mission

(Terms of reference provided in Annex 1)

As requested by the 34th Session of the World Heritage Committee (Brasilia, July 2010), a joint WHC/ICCROM Advisory mission was organized for the property of the “Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley” from 21 to 25 November 2010.

The main objectives of the Mission were:

- a. To investigate the current state of conservation of the Buddha niches and suggest adequate consolidation solutions;
- b. To consult the related Afghan authorities and stakeholders regarding the conservation and interpretation of the Buddha niches of the Bamiyan valley;
- c. To propose a long-term solution for the presentation of the Western Buddha niche and a scheme for the arrangement and rehabilitation of the site.

The Mission team consisted of Dr. Roland Lin, UNESCO Programme Specialist, Asia and the Pacific Section, World Heritage Centre, Prof. Andrea Bruno, ICCROM International expert and Prof. Claudio Margottini, UNESCO expert, assisted by Mr. Brendan Cassar (Culture unit, Kabul Office); Mr. Andy Miller (Consultant for Culture, Kabul Office) and Mr. Reza Sharifi (National Culture Officer, Kabul Office). Mr. Abassi, Director of Monuments, Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) of Afghanistan were with the international mission team in Bamiyan throughout the mission.

The second part of the WHC/ICOMOS Advisory Bodies advisory and expert mission to Kabul and Bamiyan, Afghanistan, was undertaken from 31 March to 06 April 2011, in order to undertake an evaluation on the state of conservation of the property. [...] The scope was to undertake the following tasks:

- A technical review of the State of Conservation of the two Buddha niches in Bamiyan and the priority measures to be taken for submission to and analysis by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
- Based on the above mentioned review, produce a revised Advisory Mission Report in English, in close coordination with the ICCROM International expert Prof. Andrea Bruno and the World Heritage Centre according to the Decision 34COM 7A.23. This revised Advisory Mission Report should be submitted before 8 April 2011;
- A technical review of the State of Conservation of the Bamiyan Valley Cultural Landscape and the priority measures to be taken;
- Based on this technical review, produce a Technical Report and recommendations in English. This technical report should be submitted before 15 April 2011

The ICOMOS representative, Prof. Dr. Jukka Jokilehto, was not able to join the mission in November 2010. Therefore, he undertook the mission in April 2011. Unfortunately, having already arrived in Kabul, the visit to Bamiyan had to be cancelled, first due to poor weather conditions and second due to the serious incidents against the UN offices in Afghanistan that took place at this time. Consequently, his part of the report was limited to analyzing the available documentation particularly related to planning and management of the site, and consulting the professional staff of the UNESCO Office in Kabul.

## II. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

Legal provision:

The State party adheres to several international conventions:

- Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Paris, 16 November 1972. Ratification 20/03/1979
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Paris, 14 November 1970. Acceptance 08/09/2005
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris, 17 October 2003. Acceptance 30/03/2009
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Paris, 20 October 2005; Acceptance 30/03/2009

Afghanistan is also Party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection. Furthermore, it has signed, but not ratified: Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation.

According to the **Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties** of May 2004 (Ministry of Justice No. 828), all cultural assets of the country (movable and immovable older than 100 years or due to their value regarded worthy of protection) can be protected. The declared monuments and archaeological remains of Bamiyan Valley are public property by law, owned by the State of Afghanistan. However, large parts of the buffer zone and the rest of the cultural landscape are not protected and in private ownership. In many cases, the archival documents defining ownership were destroyed during times of military conflict. Resolving land disputes is indeed regarded one of the priority objectives for long-term stabilization at the national level and it is addressed with series of international aid programs.

Afghanistan's **National Environmental Protection Agency** (NEPA) was established in 2005. In the same year, Afghanistan's first **Environment Law** was signed by President Hamid Karzai. The law then went through amendments by the National Assembly and it was adopted in January 2007. It defines the notions of national park, and protected landscape. NEPA declared Band-e-Amir as Afghanistan's first national park, which is located west of Bamiyan Valley. Land Reform in Afghanistan (LARA) is an activity within the Economic Growth Program by USAID (Reducing poverty by promoting economic growth). This project is organized with Afghan counterparts to improve land and real property laws, to upgrade and integrate informal settlements into the urban fabric, to train local officials to implement streamlined registration procedures and to facilitate land dispute resolution. The project will also provide technical assistance to several Afghan government entities, including the recently-created Afghan Land Authority, the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs and several municipalities throughout the country. Bamiyan is one of the focus areas of the program.

Due to the lack of capacities within the responsible national institutions the procedure of identifying the property and the creation of appropriate plans has been realized by international experts with the support of UNESCO in the last few years. The designated protected areas have been specified within the "Cultural Master Plan Bamiyan" and officially adopted by Ministry of Urban Development Affairs on behalf of the Afghan Government in March 2006.



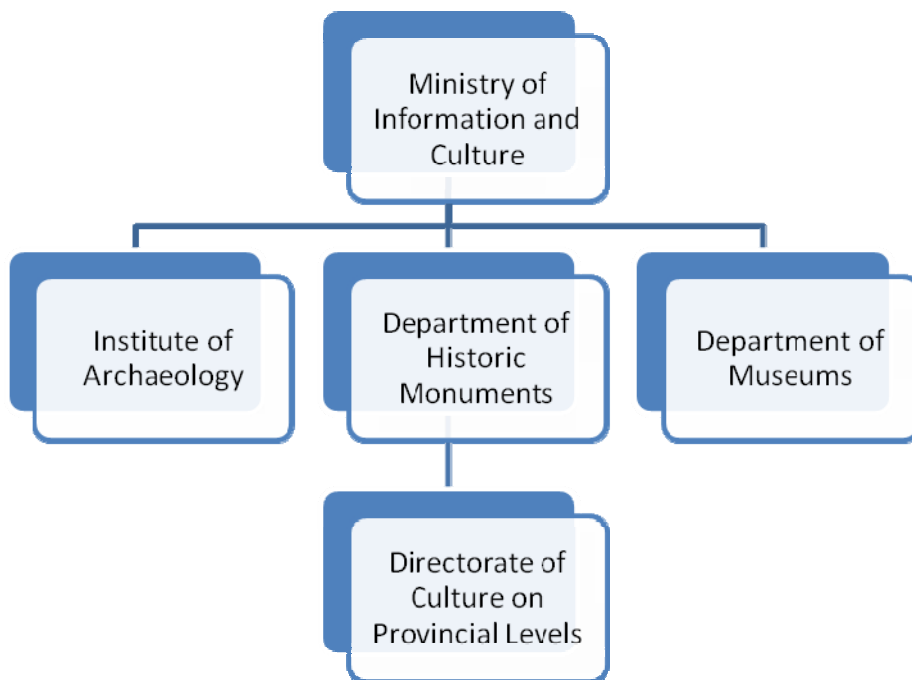
### III. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

#### Management Structure:

The 2004 law stipulates that for “study and research” the Archaeological Committee is formed to legally advise the Ministry of Information and Culture on matters regarding the “scientific, artistic and cultural value” of cultural properties. The Archaeological Commission determines the boundaries of the immovable historical structures as well as the archaeological areas (Article 14, 2004 Law).

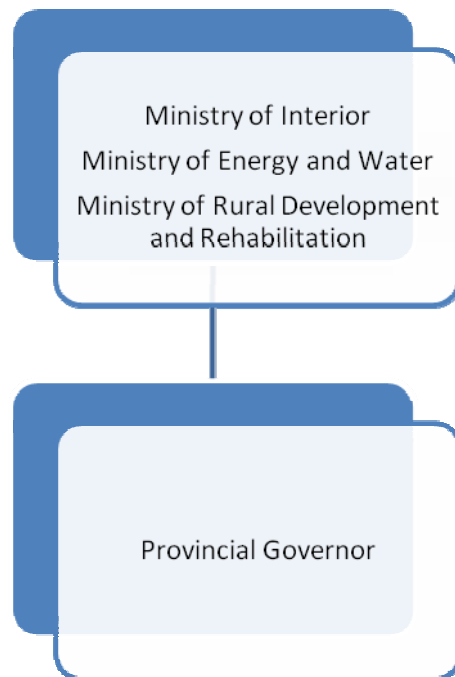
The management of the World Heritage property falls under the authority of the **Ministry of Information and Culture** (MoIC). Under the direct supervision of the Deputy Minister for Culture there is a shared responsibility for the cultural sites on an operational level between the Institute of Archaeology and the Department for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Historical Monuments within the MoIC in Kabul. The Deputy Minister for Culture participates in various sub commissions of the other ministries. He is entitled to raise concerns, as and when development projects affect cultural assets. If disputes cannot be resolved at ministerial level; decisions are then requested from the Presidential Office by direct presidential decree.

Organigram of the Ministry of Information and Culture in relation to the World Heritage property in Bamiyan Province



The Ministry of Information and Culture has a provincial local office representative in Bamiyan under the direct authority of the Governor of the Bamiyan Province (see above). The provincial Governor has to ensure the implementation of law and national policies and controls the performance of the various local directorates of the different ministries (see below).

## Structure of the Afghanistan Government in relation to the Bamiyan Province



A local police station unit is installed next to the provincial MoIC office protecting the office surroundings from vandalism and looting. Currently, the Ministry of Information and Culture has endorsed a special police unit for the protection of historic sites. The local village committees, *Shura*, decide upon land use and water management. Larger meetings, *Jirgas*, are held with the Governor of the Province for land or water issues concerning larger areas in valley. The provincial Governor is responsible for the implementation of the Provincial Development Plan (PPD) as defined within the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which includes the rehabilitation of housing, provision of health and educational services and the development of infrastructures and agriculture.

At the moment the management system of the World Heritage property is provisional with help from UNESCO and the international community, in regard to the development of a revised legal framework and appropriate administrative, scientific and technical resources. A Draft Management Plan for the property has been elaborated by the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties Tokyo in 2004 and updated in 2006; summarizing the key issues to be addressed (1).

This includes preparation and implementation of a program for the protection, conservation and presentation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Bamiyan Valley, for undertaking exploration and interpretation of the archaeological remains and for preparing and implementing a program for the property's long term conservation.

Based on these initiatives of the international community, the New Zealand funded ECO-tourism project (2008-2010) has initiated first incentives to introduce sustainable cultural tourism in the valley implemented by the Agha Khan Foundation.

The 1981 Master Plan for the "Rehabilitation and revitalization of the Bamiyan Valley cultural heritage", has been reactivated and has the objective to prepare and implement a programme for

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<sup>1</sup> Protecting the World Heritage Site of Bamiyan, Key issues for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Management Plan, NRICP, Tokyo, 2004; Part 3 and Part 4 updated in 2006,

the protection, conservation and presentation of the Bamiyan Valley, to undertake exploration and excavation of the archaeological remains, and to prepare and implement a programme for sustainable cultural tourism in the valley.

In 2006, the Governor of Bamiyan officially established the **Bamiyan Cultural Landscape Coordination Committee** (BCLCC).

#### IV. IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT OF CHALLENGES

When the property of Bamiyan Valley was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the List in Danger, it was in a fragile state of conservation having suffered from abandonment, military action and dynamite explosions. The major dangers included: risk of imminent collapse of the Buddha niches with the remaining fragments of the statues, further deterioration of still existing mural paintings in the caves, looting and illicit excavation. Parts of the site were inaccessible due to the presence of antipersonnel mines.

During the last decade, the **situation has improved considerably**. Indeed, the Bamiyan region is considered one of the safest in Afghanistan, where the social and cultural conditions of life have improved. The safeguarding operations assisted by international organizations and their invested expertise are now really beginning to show concrete results. For the time being, the cultural issues are the responsibility of the Governor of Bamiyan within the long term development plans of the Bamiyan province.

The risk of collapse of the Giant Buddha niches has been reduced, the caves and their mural paintings are protected, and adequate documentation of the decoration has been carried out. The geotechnical behavior of the property is being observed thanks to the installation of a monitoring system. The security of the property has also improved significantly, as the property is being protected against looting and illicit excavation, while the process of removal of antipersonnel mines has been completed. The prerequisites of the Safeguarding Bamiyan Phases I and II projects have been sufficiently implemented and brought considerable enhancement for the property's conservation and safety.

Concerning the planning and management of the whole Bamiyan Valley, there are basically three **Master Plans** in existence. These include the 1981 Regional Master Plan, which has been again revived in 2006. The second is the draft Comprehensive Management Plan, prepared through coordination with Japan, and published in 2004; this provides a preliminary zoning proposal and related Regulations for Zoning Control. The third is the Cultural Master Plan elaborated by RWTH Aachen Center for Documentation and Conservation, in 2005, approved by the Afghan Government in 2006. This provides a more detailed analysis and documentation of the heritage resources, and based on updated satellite mapping. The 2005 Plan is accepted as a guideline for the decision making processes at the regional level. While the 2004 Plan already provides a guideline for the general management of the area, while currently a new and updated Management Plan is under preparation by the Aachen Centre.

While these plans exist, there is a need to work more on the **capacity building**, involving the empowering of local Afghani institutions to ensure that the implementing of the legal framework, and training and awareness raising is fully achieved. The UNESCO Office in Kabul, in coordination with the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Regional authorities of Bamiyan, has significantly contributed.

Nevertheless, the question of **implementation of the Master Plans**, and in particular that of land-use and planning **control mechanisms** at the local and regional authority level are currently an important challenge, and need to be provided. It will be necessary to guarantee that all building

permits are issued based on the Master Plan, and that their implementation is properly monitored by municipal inspectors and/or police officers.

Indeed, considering that the World Heritage property only covers a small part of the **Cultural Landscape**, as is indicated in the title of the nomination, it will be indispensable and of great urgency to formally define the wider Cultural Landscape area, as an extended buffer zone to the World Heritage property. The Bamiyan Valley is a living and continuing cultural landscape. One of the key issues here is the development of **infrastructures**, such as road network, electricity, and water management, which are currently being discussed in collaboration with international donors. The decisions regarding the location of the main road and the electricity wiring through the Valley will be crucial for the integrity of the cultural landscape of Bamiyan.

Another question concerns the Bamiyan **airport**, which is expected to be relocated in a more central location to serve the whole Bamiyan region. Therefore, the current site would become available for urban development. At the moment, the problem is that the airport is not properly equipped, even dangerous in poor weather conditions, and the construction of the new airport may still take a long time. Therefore, a transitional solution may need to be found to improve safety of air traffic.

The **Bamiyan Cliff** with the niches of the destroyed Giant Buddhas has been under consolidation and conservation work since 2003. By now, the consolidation of the eastern niche (of the smaller Buddha) and its surroundings has been completed. The western niche needs further consolidation. Indeed, there are live cracks in the area, which need urgent intervention. A simple monitoring for structural movement has been installed. Work has continued on making safe the associated caves, including the conservation of the mural paintings.

While the principal safeguarding work in Bamiyan Valley so far has focused on the Bamiyan Cliff, the **archaeological survey** of other sites has also continued. An updated archaeological map is now required as a basic reference for decisions regarding the development of infrastructures. It is recalled that the World Heritage property consists of eight individual sites, and the Bamiyan Cliff is only one of them. Some sites, such as Gholghola, consist of **structures in earthen materials** and are subject to continuous erosion due to the harsh weather conditions, rain, floods, snow and extreme temperatures. This is also a seismic region. Many of these structures are in danger of collapse without implementation of a regular maintenance strategy. Some of the historic structures could be subject to restoration and eventual rehabilitation within a more general programme of visitor management.

At the present time, the issue of **raising awareness** within the local communities of Bamiyan is a key issue, which must be part of the further development of the planning and management of the cultural landscape area, and of the World Heritage property. It has been raised on several occasions by the national stakeholders, that it is essential to have a wider dissemination of relevant documents; therefore translations into the local languages are essential to ensure that the relevant and related documents concerning the planning control and management are made available.

Awareness raising is a part of the capacity building, and needs to be undertaken within an overall strategy that still needs to be prepared. The question is closely related to the policy of the **presentation** of the heritage resources of Bamiyan, and the development and implementation of appropriate **interpretation of heritage sites**. Considering that the Bamiyan heritage resources are a major asset not only for Afghanistan, but for the world, it is expected that the number of outside visitors will gradually increase as the situation allows. Therefore, related policies and strategies need to be prepared as soon as possible, taking into account short-term, medium-term and long-term implications.

In summary, the following are considered the major challenges for the foreseeable future:

1. Management and control of urban development pressures within the property and its wider cultural landscape ;

2. Mitigating the impact of weather on fragile heritage sites;
3. Defining and protecting the wider cultural landscape area;
4. Capacity building for control and sustainable development of the wider cultural landscape and related heritage resources;
5. Preparation of a comprehensive policy for the presentation and interpretation of the heritage resources in Bamiyan.

### **1. Management and Control of Urban Development;**

UNEP has been working in Afghanistan since 2002. Its involvement in Bamiyan began in 2009, with the request from the provincial governor and the national government for the development of a model community conservation area, protected landscape, and a case study for conservation planning in the Koh-e Baba Mountain Range near Bamiyan. UNEP is working on a physical, business and comprehensive strategic plan for the Shah Foladi Mountains overlooking Bamiyan in Central Afghanistan. UNEP is working with the natural resources management and protection legislation, including environmental law. In this regard there have been produced procedures in accordance with Article 22 of the Environment Law of 2007 that shall govern the establishment and administration of protected areas in the country explicitly linking cultural and environmental aspects of the protected areas.

The property suffers from adverse effects of development due to the permanent influx of returnees to the province. There is strong pressure to develop land for housing purposes. Recently, such development has also been triggered by local interest to develop mining industries in the region. The integrity of the traditional agricultural land use and associated social fabric is vulnerable in the light of the on-going development, and increasingly urbanized settlements and the construction of infrastructures. An appropriate sustainable land-use strategy and overall protection of the entire cultural landscape should be prepared and implemented as urgency.

### **2. Mitigating the structural problems and the impact of weather on fragile heritage sites;**

The Mission noted the progress of the measures for the safeguarding of the World Heritage property. The current state of conservation of the Bamiyan cliff could be generally characterized as adequate. After the completion of Safeguarding Phase I (2003-2006) and Phase II (2007-2009), the main stability problems of the Bamiyan Cliff have been answered.

Nevertheless, the Bamiyan Cliff is only one part of the World Heritage property, and the challenges in the other sites, and in the nationally protected areas are also in need of urgent intervention and a coherent maintenance and management strategy. In particular, the partly ruined earthen structures are at risk of collapse in many cases.

### **3. Defining and protecting the wider cultural landscape;**

Taking into account the importance of the visual integrity in the wider landscape, and the challenges now posed by the on-going urban development, it is of great importance for the safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property that the present fragmented buffer zones be integrated into one zone, so as to cover at least the central part of the three valleys, with the associated mountain ranges and hills. From the point of view of planning control, the buffer zone should also cover the urban development areas.

#### **4. Capacity building;**

An overall improvement of the situation in Bamiyan has been noted. The local community's awareness of their past and cultural identity has been re-appropriated and enhanced. There is an increase of income and employment possibilities for the community. Training has been provided and the university has responded and developed positively. The basis for the inception of cultural tourism to Bamiyan has also been created, together with the introduction of a national strategy for the preservation of Cultural Heritage. Finally, the national capacity in the conservation of Cultural Heritage has increased and the capacities and expertise of Afghan cultural-heritage experts have been strengthened. There is however, still a great need for the capacity building in the development of territorial management and monitoring, and the implementation of control mechanisms in the whole cultural landscape area.

#### **5. Preparation of a comprehensive policy for the presentation and interpretation.**

For the proposed Shah Foladi National Park and Protected Area it will have as many as fourteen entry points through gateway villages, as much as thirty kilometers apart and distance from Bamiyan town. This suggests the need for a single **Central Visitor Centre** in Bamiyan itself addressing the cultural and natural aspects of the Cultural Landscape of the Bamiyan Valley. UNEP intends to fund and realize such a visitor center along an idealized spatial and heritage axis between the Giant Buddhas World Heritage site in Bamiyan and the Koh e-Baba peaks of the Shah Foladi range. The final location for this visitor center has not been finalized yet. No specific imminent threats to the outstanding universal value of the Bamiyan Cliff site were identified during the Mission. The Team, however, was concerned by the static condition of the procedures for the identification of a long-term solution for the conservation/interpretation of the Western Buddha niche.

### **V. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY**

#### **Outcome of the Ninth Expert Working Group Meeting in Paris, 3-4 March 2011**

March 2011 marked the tenth anniversary of the devastating destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues and other invaluable cultural objects in Afghanistan. On this occasion, UNESCO, in close cooperation with the Afghan authorities, organized the Ninth Expert Working Group Meeting at its Headquarters on the 3 and 4 March 2011. The meeting examined the initial proposals of four international teams for remedial measures and the future presentation of the two Buddha niches (Prof. A. Bruno/Italy, Hon. President, Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation (RLICC) of Leuven University; Prof. M. Jansen, Aachen University, Germany; Prof. K. Maeda, Visiting Researcher, Japan Centre for International Co-operation in Conservation, NRICP, Tokyo, Japan and the team of Prof. Emmerling, Munich Technical University and Prof. M. Petzet, President ICOMOS, Germany). In view of the available scientific data and estimated financial requirement, the Ninth Expert Working Group Meeting decided that a total reconstruction of either of the Buddha sculptures cannot be considered at the present time. It was recommended that the larger western niche be consolidated and left empty as a testimony to the tragic act of destruction and that a feasibility study be undertaken to determine whether or not a partial reassembling of fragments of the Eastern Buddha could be an option in the coming years. The Meeting also considered that the Desired State of Conservation for the property for its potential removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger should be attained by 2013. Participants at the meetings also concluded that with the tragedy of the destruction now behind us, the Bamiyan Valley with its unique history, and its cultural heritage of tangible and intangible constitutes the local communities

- a highly fertile environment for learning how to transform a destructive act into an opportunity to reinforce tolerance, peace and development through culture for future generations.

Regarding the implementation of corrective measures, the following progress has been indicated:

**In general the main observed damages on the archaeological remains of Shahr-e Gholghola and Shar-e Zohak are:**

1. Erosion due to water (rain and snow) and in some cases wind. This factor has washed not only away the building surfaces (and in many cases penetrated into the building), but also the soil and the bases of most of the buildings in the site. A great number of buildings have problems with their lower structural parts of the base and walls.
2. Crumbling of mud brick structures due water penetration into the joints since the mud and straw (kahgel) plaster of the walls has been worn away by erosion process.
3. Cracks due to erosion, walls are disoriented, extra load due to upper buildings erosion, water penetration, ground and soil erosion and base/foundation problems.
4. Collapse, crumbling and missing materials that can be seen in walls, roofs, arches and openings have different reasons; illegal excavation, rain and water erosion.
5. Loss of room shapes. Due to debris, soil erosion and collapses, many parts of the walls, especially the bases have been covered with soil, stone and remains of mud-bricks. In order to recover the floors, excavation is recommended.
6. Loss of rooftops. Most of the buildings have lost their roofs; only a few of the rooftops partially maintain their roofs. These roofs are dome shape roofs. From other arched-roofs only some traces of the arches have been remained. To have a better understanding of the old roof structures, excavation is recommended.
7. Loss of urban fabric. The historic pattern of streets and pathways is hardly traceable any more. Current pathways follow shortest distance to the top often crossing above historic eroded structures.

**Ensuring site security:**

Since 2009 considerable work has been undertaken by the local authorities in cooperation with the UNESCO Kabul for the de-mining of heritage sites and the removal of unexploded ordinance throughout the valley. However, this does not guarantee a complete absence of mines or UXOs which could still be found in the valley as a result of natural processes like soil and rock erosion, melt-down snow, ice melt and earthquakes. These processes may uncover and bring down other remnants of war. As a consequence, all archaeological prospection and conservation work will have to be undertaken with the utmost caution. On-site training has to be ensured for the de-mining teams that accompany future archaeological interventions. The Ministry of Culture and Information has currently deployed 8 guards to control illegal or unauthorized access to the sites. The MoIC and the Ministry of Interior have also deployed a team of police officers from the specialized unit (012) for the protection of cultural properties to monitor / safeguard the World Heritage properties within the Valley. The size of this force needs to be increased and provided with a minimum of facilities such as communication devices and use of existing local buildings.

### **Ensure long-term stability of the Giant Buddha niches by installing a permanent monitoring system:**

The stabilization of the Eastern Buddha niche, in particular its rear wall and the remains of the sculpture within, has been successfully completed at the end of 2010. The safety of the path leading to the top of the Eastern Buddha niche has also been ensured. For safety of visitors to the site, various protective elements have been placed on the stairways and on other parapets, certain steps have been rebuilt and broken doors replaced. The scaffolding used for the Eastern Buddha will now be shifted to the Western one in order to start stabilization work on the latter. There is an urgent need for intervention on a crack on the entrance to the head of the western niche, subject to a constant seismic vibration and therefore in danger of an imminent collapse. Temporary shelters have been made for the fragments of the destroyed statues. The Ninth Expert Working Group Meeting recommended constructing a central museum in Bamiyan in order to house the site fragments and findings for visitors and future initiatives.

### **Ensure adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings:**

The NRICP, Tokyo, has accomplished considerable work on the conservation of the murals. Local conservation technicians need to be trained with conservators from Kabul. Site monitoring and maintenance must be reinforced. The remaining murals have to be guarded from further looting. Substantial work has been accomplished by the French archaeological mission in Bamiyan (French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs) in front of the Eastern Buddha to uncover, preserve and restore the archaeological remains (Oriental Monastery and Royal Monastery sites and their transformation the site Museum (into a situ Museum).

### **Implement the Management Plan and the Cultural Master Plan:**

The Cultural Master Plan developed by the local authorities, in consultation with UNESCO and implementing partners has now been finalized and adopted by the local government in Bamiyan and the Ministries of Urban Development and Information and Culture at the national level. It provides an overall development strategy for the World Heritage property and for the wider cultural landscape. There have been minor encroachments within the boundaries of the Buddha Cliff, however, these have not yet impacted negatively on the attributes of the Buddha Cliff that contribute to OUV and are being controlled within the framework of the Master Plan. The Plan needs to be reinforced with the enforcement of building codes and controls on development in the property and its buffer zones, and other areas protected under the Afghan Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties 2004, detailed ground surveys and site documentation of the remaining World Heritage areas including archaeological prospection for determining their possible extension (Kakrak, Gholghola, Foladi, Qula-e Kaphari). The Ninth Expert Working Group Meeting recommended the creation of a Quality Control Commission for development projects within the area determined by the Cultural Master Plan with a permanent presence of UNESCO experts, members of the Afghan Government and other International Organisations working in the area. The Meeting further recommended that a Cultural Landscape and the Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley management plan needs to be developed and finalized in close collaboration with the local authorities and should serve as a point of reference for all future interventions.



## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The continuous efforts and the genuine commitment demonstrated by the State Party, already highlighted in all of the World Heritage Committee Decisions, should be once again pointed out by this Joint Missions' report. We also acknowledge the aid provided to date by the members of the international community and underline the need for this cooperation to be further continued.

The state of conservation of the property, as outlined before, appears to be quite sufficient. All the actions taken so far have been successful and have contributed to the safeguarding of the property. The actions taken from now on should be aimed at the conservation of current state of the property and the preservation of the consolidating interventions, but at the same time, action should be taken in regard to the rehabilitation of the site and the resolution of the Western Buddha's interpretation and in progressing the corrective measures to achieve the Desired State of Conservation for removal of the property from the World Heritage List in Danger

Recommendations for any additional action to be taken by the State Party, including draft proposals should be submitted to the World Heritage Committee.

Afghan officials and international experts outlined plans for the future safeguarding of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan) at two important meetings at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris during March 2011 to mark the occasion of the Tenth anniversary of the tragic destruction of the giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan. On 2 March, an international forum on the Buddhas of Bamiyan explored the theme "Towards Cultural Rapprochement and Tolerance". The Bamiyan Expert Working Group convened for its ninth meeting on 3 and 4 March. The international experts and Afghan officials – including the Minister of Information and Culture, the Minister for Urban Development and the Governor of Bamiyan Province – decided to launch a new phase to safeguard the property, inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List as well on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2003.

After examining proposals for remedial measures and the future presentation of the two Buddha niches from international teams of experts from Germany, Italy, and Japan, the participants agreed that:

- A total reconstruction of either of the Buddha sculptures should not be considered at the present time in view of the available scientific data, and financial resources that would be required.
- The larger western niche will be consolidated and left empty as a testimony to the tragic act of destruction. A feasibility study may be undertaken to determine whether or not a partial reassembling of fragments of the eastern Buddha could be an option in the coming years.
- There is a need to construct a central museum in Bamiyan and smaller site museums at the various zones within the Bamiyan Cultural Landscape World Heritage property in order to preserve and display the on-site findings .
- Work needs to be pursued to safeguard and preserve the entire cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley with due regard to all the archaeological and architectural components necessary for the future development of Bamiyan.
- A Bamiyan Cultural Landscape management plan needs to be developed in close collaboration with the local authorities and should serve as a point of reference for all future interventions.

In line with the above-mentioned and after a series of missions to the World Heritage property and the meetings with the relevant national authorities, the members of the Joint Mission recommended the following:

1. The tragic destruction of the Western Buddha statue forms part of the World Heritage property's history; therefore, a proposal for the presentation of the site should take into consideration this aspect of the monument's history;
2. A proposal for the presentation of the site should not include, in any case, a total 'reconstruction' of the statue; such an act would not only be contrary to the principles of the Venice Charter, but would nullify the meaning that the monument has assumed for humanity after its destruction;
3. The back and the surrounding rock of the Western Buddha niche, which are currently unstable, will have to be consolidated and stabilized;
4. All necessary measures for the safeguarding of the niche will have to be taken: continuation of niche's monitoring, study of seismic stability, maintenance of drainage, documentation;
5. The site of the Western Buddha niche will have to be cleared; all stone blocks and fragments spread at the bottom of the niche should be immediately documented and identified and subsequently removed;
6. The temporary constructions for the storage of the fragments of the Buddhas, built in front of the Western Buddha niche, should be removed; suitable and permanent storage spaces should be thought-out and constructed in a reasonable distance from the site, preferably in relation to a small site interpretation centre/point potentially in front of the Western Buddha niche;
7. A proposal for the representation of the site, and the interpretation of the destroyed Buddha niches in particular, should be compatible with and/or supportive to the necessary conservation measures;
8. An integrated approach should include, apart from the potential small site interpretation centre/point for the Western Buddha statue that will act as the site's main attraction, and further supportive facilities for an integrated experience of the site: museums, exhibition spaces, workshops, small shops;
9. The broader surroundings of the Western Giant Buddha niche, including the bazaar destroyed during the 1970's war, should also be re-habilitated, within the framework of an integrated approach towards the rehabilitation of site;
10. The proposal for the Western Buddha's representation should be fitted within a broader scheme of an integrated Management Plan (under preparation) and the existing Bamiyan Culture Master Plan for the whole World Heritage property;
11. A consideration of a rising number of tourists, once the political situation is stabilized in the country, should also be included in the preparation of a proposal for the representation of the site; studies on the carrying capacity and sustainability of the site should be carried out.
12. Works to be carried out immediately: the works for the consolidation and stabilization of the back of the Western Buddha niche, the arrangement of the walkers' and automobiles' circulation, as well as the clearing of the site from the stone blocks and fragments at the bottom of the niche;

13. Works to be carried out immediately after the Working Group meeting in Paris, March 2011 and, in any case, before the end of 2011: The definite proposal for the conservation and representation of the site, together with all its supportive facilities and the overall sustainable management of the site, should be submitted to and discussed with the Afghan authorities.

Even though the political situation in the country remains unstable, the level of direct threats to the property is relatively low. The principal challenges to the property come mainly from the pressures of local development, due to increasing population and economic growth. Therefore, there is a need for improved control mechanisms, and more systematic implementation of the planning instruments. Furthermore, there is need for a clear vision in the overall management, and activation of the local Cultural Landscape Coordination Committee.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Terms of reference

#### Terms of Reference for the mission in November 2010

Following the Decision 34.COM 7A.23 taken by the World Heritage Committee at its 34<sup>th</sup> Session (Brasilia, Brazil) in 2010, the Committee requested that an advisory mission should be undertaken at Bamiyan, Afghanistan in order to make an evaluation on the state of conservation of the property. And within the framework of UNESCO's Japanese Funds in Trust Project (536AFG4004) for "Safeguarding of the Bamiyan Site Phase III", in close collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the UNESCO Kabul Office [...], the following tasks shall be carried out:

- 1) The technical review in the field of the State of Conservation of the two Buddha niches in Bamiyan, for submission to and analysis by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
- 2) To assist the State Party in identification of long-term solutions for the Buddha niches in Bamiyan; and priority measures to be held, for submission to and analysis by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
- 3) Produce a technical report, including:
  - a) The technical review in the field of the State of Conservation of the two Buddha niches in Bamiyan;
  - b) The review of the identification of long-term solutions for the Buddha niches in Bamiyan;
  - c) And the guidance/advice of the priority measures to be held.

Within the framework of UNESCO's Japanese Funds in Trust Project (536AFG4004) for "Safeguarding of the Bamiyan Site Phase III", carry out the following tasks during the mission to Bamiyan in Afghanistan, with the purpose of beginning the drafting a proposal of the long-term conservation/interpretation of the Western big Buddha niche to be presented for further discussion at the next Bamiyan Working group meeting, foreseen in March 2011:

- Check in situ in Bamiyan about the feasibility of a proposal of the long-term conservation/interpretation of the Western big Buddha niche;
- Consult with UNESCO Kabul office, the Bamiyan Governor (or the Governor's representative) and all relevant Afghan officials, experts and stakeholders on the purpose of drafting a proposal for the long-term conservation and interpretation of the Western big Buddha niche. Any recommendations developed and advices provided during this consultation process shall be integrated into the presentation on the aforementioned proposal, to be given at the next Bamiyan Working group meeting (foreseen in March 2011).

#### Terms of Reference for the mission in April 2011

Following the Decision 34COM 7A.23 taken by the World Heritage Committee at its 34<sup>th</sup> Session (Brasilia, Brazil) in 2010, the Committee requested that an advisory mission should be undertaken at Bamiyan, Afghanistan. In this Context, the Consultant shall:

1. Undertake the second part of the WHC/Advisory Bodies advisory and expert mission to Kabul and Bamiyan, Afghanistan, from 31 March to 06 April 2011, in order to undertake an evaluation on the state of conservation of the property. [...]
2. Undertake the following tasks:
  - a) A technical review of the State of Conservation of the two Buddha niches in Bamiyan and the priority measures to be taken for submission to and analysis by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;

- b) Based on the above mentioned review (2.a), produce a revised Advisory Mission Report in English, in close coordination with the ICCROM International expert Prof. Andrea Bruno and the World Heritage Centre according to the Decision 34COM 7A.23. This revised Advisory Mission Report should be submitted before 8 April 2011;
- c) A technical review of the State of Conservation of the Bamiyan Valley Cultural Landscape and the priority measures to be taken;
- d) Based on this technical review (2.c), produce a Technical Report and recommendations in English. This technical report should be submitted before 15 April 2011

## **Annex 2: Notes on the Meetings and consultation with national authorities and stakeholders**

### **1. Meeting in Kabul with Vice-Minister for Culture, Ministry of Information and Culture, Afghanistan**

A preparation meeting was held in Kabul with the Vice Minister for Culture in the Ministry of Information and Culture. The Vice-Minister, on behalf of State Party, expressed the willingness to facilitate the mission and expressed a detailed proposal regarding the conservation and interpretation of the Buddha niches of the Bamiyan valley that could be presented to the next Expert Group and discussed with the Afghan authorities at the first available opportunity.

### **2. Meeting with the Deputy Governor of Bamiyan, Shura Council Representatives, Director of the MoIC in Bamiyan, and Director of UNAMA Bamiyan**

The Deputy Governor and other Government Representatives expressed their general support for UNESCO's cultural activities in Bamiyan since 2003 and their strong wish for UNESCO to establish an office in Bamiyan to coordinate these activities and to liaise and advise the local Afghan authorities on the implementation of the Cultural Master Plan and World Heritage management Plan in Bamiyan.

### **3. Meeting with the Deputy Rector and other Professors of Bamiyan University**

The Deputy Rector and other professors expressed their general support for UNESCO's cultural activities in Bamiyan since 2003 and their strong wish for UNESCO to establish more joint activities with the Bamiyan University, particularly with the Faculty of Geology, Faculty of Archaeology, Faculty of Tourism and Faculty of Agriculture.

### **4. Meeting with the Director of UNAMA in Bamiyan Ms. Heran Song**

The Director of UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan) in Bamiyan Ms. Heran Song expressed her support for UNESCO's cultural programme in Bamiyan and underlined the importance that UNAMA places onto UNESCO's role and coordination for the development of the region, with culture at the heart of a sustainable development. Ms. Song also expressed UNAMA's willingness to further support and cooperate with UNESCO on the organization of workshops and events, which help to raise awareness amongst the public and local government of the importance of safeguarding and developing the World Heritage property's sustainability. Ms. Song requested a stronger UNESCO presence in Bamiyan, committing to provide space within the UNAMA compound for a UNESCO/CLT site office.

### **ANNEX 3: List and Contact Details of People met**

#### **Afghan officials of Ministry of Information and Culture**

1. H.E. Mr. Omar Said Sultan, Deputy Minister for Culture, Ministry of Information and Culture
2. Mr. Abdul Ahad Abassy, Director of Historical Monuments Department, MoIC
3. Mr. Mohammad Nader Rassoli, Director of the Institute of Archaeology, MoIC

#### **Bamiyan Governor Office:**

4. Mr. Haji Qasem, Deputy for the Bamiyan Governor
5. Mr. Ghurban Ali Rasuli, the head of Executive Committee
6. Mr. Haidar Ali Ahamadi, the Member of Provincial Council
7. Mr. Wahidi Beheshti, the Member of Provincial Council
8. Mr. Ebrahim Akbari, The head of MoIC in Bamiyan
9. Ms. Saberi Nawazi, Secretary to the Bamiyan Governor

#### **Bamiyan University:**

10. Mr. Abdullah Nawroozi, the head of Administration and deputy to the dean of Bamiyan University
11. Mr. Hassan Hassanyar, Head of Archeology Department
12. Mr. Chaman Ali Hekmat, Head of English Department
13. Mr. Amin Joia, Assistant- Professor and Head of Research Unit
14. Mr. Ghaseimyar, Assistant-Professor
15. Mr. Hassan Alizada, Head of Public Relation Unit

#### **UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan) in Bamiyan :**

16. Ms. Heran Song, Director
17. Mr. Keiichi Tanabe, Development Coordination Officer

#### **Kabul National Museum:**

18. Deputy Director
19. Two other Museum staffs

#### **DAFA (Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan)**

20. Monsieur Philippe Marquis, Directeur
21. Monsieur Roland Besenval, ancien Directeur
22. Other staff members