



*Ministry of Information and Culture  
of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*

## **10<sup>th</sup> Expert Working Group Meeting for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage Property, Afghanistan**

**NRICP, Tokyo, Japan (6-8 December 2011)**

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Introductory Remarks:***

The year 2011 marked the tenth anniversary of the devastating destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. UNESCO and the Afghan authorities co-organized an International Forum for Tolerance at UNESCO Headquarters in March 2011 and the 9<sup>th</sup> Bamiyan Expert Working Group meeting to commemorate the tragic events surrounding the destruction of cultural heritage in Bamiyan and Afghanistan in 2001. These meetings recognized that, while commendable results have been obtained with regards to the overall safeguarding of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley, much work needs to be done to secure the site and to remove it from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Within this framework, UNESCO, in close cooperation with the Afghan authorities and the NRICP Tokyo, organized the 10th Bamiyan Expert Working Group Meeting in Tokyo, Japan, 6-8 December 2011 to clarify a programme of safeguarding to be implemented in the future JFIT Bamiyan Phase IV project. The aim of this meeting was to advise UNESCO and the Afghanistan authorities on issues related to the conservation of the Bamiyan World Heritage property by reviewing and assessing ongoing activities in Bamiyan, as well as identifying needs and opportunities for future initiatives.

The discussion recognized the importance of a cultural development approach for future projects in Bamiyan that incorporates and demonstrates the contribution of culture to sustainable livelihoods, education and the promotion of peace in Afghanistan. Within this context, the meeting also provided an opportunity for the coordination of international efforts and discussion concerning a range of issues that included infrastructure and development plans of the Afghan Government for Bamiyan in the short and long term and the broader spectrum of heritage management challenges facing Bamiyan and its population.

Within the framework of the One UN initiative, the Bamiyan Expert Working Group further recognises that the current initiatives for the conservation and sustainable management of

the World Heritage properties of Bamiyan are fully in line with the UNDAF (United Nations Assistance Development Framework) and the Afghan National Development Strategy. The participants consider that the conservation of this outstanding heritage site contributes to promoting peace and fostering sustainable development, in particular for the people of Bamiyan, and in Afghanistan as a whole, by demonstrating the possibility of building sustainable communities by fostering cultural diversity and an appropriate use of the natural and cultural environment.

An important outcome of the preceding 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Bamiyan Expert Working Group meetings (Munich, March 2010, UNESCO, Paris March 2011) was the preliminary discussion on possible long-term solutions for the conservation, presentation and interpretation of the Buddha niches and fragments of the statues following their structural stabilization. Following Decision 35 COM 7A.25 of the World Heritage Committee at its 35<sup>th</sup> Session (Cultural landscape and Archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley, Afghanistan (C 208 rev), Decision: 35 COM 7A.25), when considering options for the treatment of the Buddha niches, the Afghan Government should ensure that proposals are based on feasibility studies which include:

- a) An overall approach to conservation and presentation of the property,
- b) An appropriate conservation philosophy based on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,
- c) Technical and financial possibilities for the implementation of the project proposals;

The participants proposed that the 10<sup>th</sup> Bamiyan Expert Working Group adopt the principle recommendations from the 9<sup>th</sup> Working Group in the areas of conservation of the property, site interpretation, archaeology, management plan and cultural master plan, capacity-building and other issues still outstanding for implementation during the Phase IV JFIT project, the Swiss Development and Cooperation (SDC) Project to revitalize parts of the cultural landscape and emergency measures for the site of Chehel Burj and other possible fund-raising efforts of institutional participants in the Working Group.

The participants of the 10<sup>th</sup> Expert Working Group meeting, building from the 9<sup>th</sup> Expert Working Group meeting:

### **Culture and Development**

1. Taking note of the text of the Kabul Charter for Sustainable Heritage Development,<sup>1</sup> which outlines a set of principles and guidelines for an integrated and sustainable heritage development, highlighting the importance of community engagement, cultural diversity, cultural mapping and sustainable heritage tourism, adopted this as the guiding principles for the formulation of Phase IV of the Japan FIT project for Bamiyan and its implementation which should bring forward a holistic approach to culture in development and promoting a culture of peace in Afghanistan;
2. Recommended a harmonization of conservation and development approaches to heritage management;

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<sup>1</sup> *Kabul Charter for Sustainable Heritage Development: Bringing Afghan People and Their Heritage Together*, Kabul, October 18-21, 2010

3. Recommended to further promote the preservation and revitalization of the cultural landscape through the ongoing implementation of the SDC /UNESCO Kabul Office project to address conservation issues in living;

#### **Bamiyan Museum for Peace**

4. Recognized the importance and necessity of a Museum for Peace in Bamiyan;
5. Recommended that a Provincial Museum be constructed in Bamiyan and smaller site interpretation centres at the eight specific sites that compose the World Heritage property and the geo-cultural features of the Bamiyan province; this Bamiyan Museum should store the fragments collected as well as any other materials and findings from conservation works and archaeological excavations and house a conservation laboratory;
6. Encouraged Bamiyan Experts Working Group to create links between ongoing activities and future museum development;
7. Recommended that the UNESCO Kabul Office continues to develop, advocate and raise funds for the Bamiyan Museum for Peace project in cooperation with the Afghan authorities (the Ministry of Information and Culture and the local authorities in Bamiyan) expert institutions and stakeholders. The inclusion of a feasibility study for the Bamiyan Museum should be explored within the proposal for the Phase IV project and implemented by the UNESCO Kabul Office and relevant expert national and international implementing partners;

#### **Proposals for remedial measures and the future presentation of the two Buddha niches**

8. 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);
9. Decided that in view of the available scientific data and estimated financial requirement, a total reconstruction of either of the Buddha sculptures cannot be considered at the present time;
10. 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 which could be further examined by the Expert Working Group, the International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage, as well as by the World Heritage Committee before final submission to the Afghan authorities for consideration;
11. Confirmed that the 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;
12. Recommended that a Bamiyan Cultural Landscape 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;

13. Encouraged ICOMOS Germany to share the concept for a site interpretation centre at the Eastern Buddha niche with the participants for comment and advice;

#### **Ensuring site security**

14. Noted the significant progress made in ensuring the safety of the World Heritage property by completing the demining of the Bamiyan Valley, which is a precondition for any conservation and presentation work, and recognized the efforts of UNESCO and the Ministry of Information and Culture, in cooperation with UNMAS, MACCA and local partners to achieve this important result;
15. Recommended, however, for the safety of all concerned, that any new archaeological excavations be carried out with the support of a demining team in the World Heritage areas cleared in 2008-2009 (Shar-i-Zohak, Shar-i-Gholgholah, Top of Buddha Cliffs);
16. Recommended the zoning of the sites as per the Master Plan and UNESCO recommendations for de-mining, the cataloguing of the sites/monuments/objects with an assessment of their significance and damage, the undertaking of a comparative analysis between the previously collected data and current data, providing safe pathways and trails for visitors and communities, prioritizing the conservation and restoration of the sites/monuments and objects and preparing a risk management plan for the site, and last but not the least providing on-site training to de-mining teams regarding intervention in archaeological / historical areas;
17. Noted the appointment of trained guards and an archaeological police force on site to fight against illicit excavations and looting on the site and urge the local and national authorities to increase the size of this force and to provide a minimum of facilities such as communication devices and use of existing local buildings;
18. Advocated public awareness and education programs in order to address the issue of the illicit traffic of antiquities;
19. Recommended the incorporation of recent excavations into the site security plan of the MoIC (e.g. MO/Oriental Monastery, MR/ Royal Monastery);

#### **Safeguarding the remains of the Buddhas and their niches**

20. Noted with satisfaction the work undertaken by ICOMOS Germany to achieve the recommendations of the 8th and the 9<sup>th</sup> Expert Group Meetings with regards to the stabilization of the rear wall of the Eastern Buddha and the safety of the path leading to the top of the eastern Buddha niche, making it possible to have visitors back on site. Many major cracks and loose hanging rocks in this niche have been consolidated with back filling, grouting, drilling and setting anchors; the more minor cracks received subtle conservation treatment with injection of materials. A long vertical crack on the side of the plait was stabilized. 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 with identically made new doors using modern timber;
21. Given the successful completion of the consolidation of the Eastern Buddha recommended that the repairs therein be monitored closely and that its scaffolding be dismantled and transferred to the Western Buddha with the purpose of starting the latter's consolidation work at the earliest. The experts called for an urgent intervention particularly with regards to the entrance to the head of the western niche,

- containing a crack subject to a constant seismic vibration and therefore in danger of an imminent collapse;
22. Recommended that special attention be paid to the sub-surface area in front of the western niche which may contain archaeological remains. Specific initiatives should be undertaken in order to contain and control the erosion and alluvial flooding in between and in front of the niches. Local capacities for the management of the necessary geological surveys should be developed at the Bamiyan University;
  23. Noted that safe accessibility to the lower gallery of the Eastern Buddha niche should be improved;

#### **Adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings**

24. Noted the severe damages incurred on the murals in the Bamiyan caves due to adverse environmental conditions but also as a result of vandalism acts before and after 2000;
25. Noted with satisfaction the conservation strategies adopted by NRICP, Tokyo, Japan, in 2010 which include keeping Afghanistan-ASI's gypsum edging; securing the current state of the murals with minimum intervention; quick and simple treatment; no coloring on the edges, injecting mortar into cracks and the completion of the pilot project in Cave N(a) etc.;
26. Recommended that local conservation technicians be trained with conservators from Kabul;
27. Urged for the implementation of sustainability activities such as site monitoring and maintenance, construction of the Bamiyan museum, creation of tourist routes, cave key management and security, installation of secured staircases and banisters in the caves, sign boards and comprehensive site interpretation;
28. Recommended the identification and execution of emergency conservation actions for mural paintings and physical remains (consolidation, drainage, repair) for these World Heritage areas; as well as the archaeological investigation, cleaning, drainage, repairing and protection be carried out for these World Heritage areas (notably for Shar-i-Zohak, Shar-i-Gholghola, Quala-i-Kaphari, Kakrak and Foladi);
29. Noted with satisfaction, the work accomplished by the French archaeological mission in Bamiyan (French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs) under Professor Tarzi's guidance to uncover, preserve and restore the archaeological remains on the MO (Oriental Monastery) and MR (Royal Monastery) sites and their transformation into a site Museum ( in situ Museum); DAFA (Délégation d'Archéologie Française en Afghanistan) will continue to support scientifically and financially the work of Professor Tarzi;
30. Encouraged the Afghan authorities to secure lands containing archaeological remains in order to ensure their preservation;
31. Recommended the conduct of an archaeological survey in the Bamiyan Valley and the results published in comparison with previous results in 2005 and 2006 to investigate and identify the presence of buried cultural property and the size of archaeological sites;

#### **Implementation of the Management Plan and Cultural Master Plan (the protective zoning plan)**

32. Noted the Cultural Master Plan prepared jointly by Aachen University experts and the local Bamiyan Authorities, the objectives defined by the Bamiyan Expert Working Group and duly considering the Afghan National Development Strategy as well as the on-site conditions;
33. Recommended however that an archaeological sites map be established and cross-read with the Cultural Master Plan in order to avoid damage to potentially imbedded archaeological remains;
34. Lauded the achievements of the local authorities over the last 10 years in rendering the Bamiyan province among the safest in Afghanistan despite the overall security situation in the country. Bamiyan holds the highest school enrolment rate for girls and the highest women's participation in elections in Afghanistan and has registered a net increase in cultural tourism;
35. Recommended that, in order to finalise the Management plan for Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage Property, this Management and Cultural Master Plan now be established and shared with all the national and international actors as a reference for the overall development strategy for the valley;
36. Urged the local and national authorities to continue coordination of efforts to safeguard and preserve the entire Bamiyan cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley with due regard to all its archaeological and architectural components: Enforcement of building codes and controls on development in the buffer zones and core zones of the World Heritage areas and other areas protected under the Afghan Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties 2004;
37. Recommended the completion of 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);
38. Urged to reinforce capacity building within the Provincial Government and the University of Bamiyan through the organization of training workshops (on Globe Information Systems, Management, Tourism and Archaeology) in Bamiyan and in partnerships with universities abroad, if appropriate;
39. Recommended the creation of a Quality Control Commission for development projects within 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;
40. Welcomed the proposition of the Ministry of Urban Development to share the Master Plan for Bamiyan with the MoIC, Bamiyan authorities and the BWG for comment and advice for the formal approval;
41. Encouraged that all archaeological surveys, documentation, excavations, conservation activities, be integrated into the Cultural Master Plan under the supervision of the MoIC;
42. Welcomed the presentation of UNOPS on the Foladi road and their intentions for flexibility, consultation and information sharing prior to and during the construction. A heritage impact assessment will be provided by the Ministry of Culture for inclusion in their annual state of conservation report (due February 2012) to the World Heritage Committee;

**Other recommendations**

43. Encouraged the Afghan authorities to continue inter-ministerial co-ordination as well as discussion and information-sharing between provincial and national authorities for the benefit of all tangible and intangible heritage in Afghanistan;
44. Underlined the necessary interconnection between all ongoing and future initiatives in Bamiyan and therefore the need to ensure coordination among international experts, agencies and relevant Afghan Authorities at all levels;
45. Underlined the importance of clear information to local people and the involvement of the latter with regards to all decisions and activities on the site in order to ensure their appropriation of the future developments on the existing cultural landscape;
46. Recommended that documentation related to the above mentioned scientific activities undertaken on site should be made available to the Afghan Authorities and to UNESCO for future utilization and that it should be translated into the main Afghan languages;
47. Considered that the photo record and documentation as well as all documentation from the archaeological excavations of Bamiyan by various experts and institutions should be deposited in the archives of the MoIC for future generations;
48. Encouraged that detailed proposals for any new projects should be prepared in advance of the meeting by their authors for review by experts and discussion at the Expert Working Group meeting. No projects should be implemented unless they have been discussed by the Expert Working Group and cleared by the Afghan authorities. Major interventions, moreover, should be submitted to the World Heritage Committee according to paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
49. Noted that the Afghan authorities, together with its international implementing partners, proposed that the Desired State of Conservation for the property should be attained gradually in view of its potential removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
50. Participants also recognize the efforts made to improve the State of Conservation of the property and conclude that Bamiyan site can be a successful story for heritage conservation and sustainable development;
51. Participants at the meetings also concluded that with the tragedy of the destruction now behind us, the Bamiyan Valley - with its unique history, tangible and intangible cultural heritage and local communities - constitutes a fertile environment for learning how to transform a destructive act into an opportunity to reinforce tolerance, peace and development through culture for future generations.