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ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR L'EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DU PATRIMOINE
MONDIAL, CULTUREL ET NATUREL

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE / COMITE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

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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

Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius) (C1227)/ Aapravasi Ghat (Maurice) (C 1227)
19-23 March 2012/ 19-23 mars 2012

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

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Report on the Joint UNESCO/ ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission



Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius)

19 – 23 March 2012

Muhammad Juma (ICOMOS)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Aapravasi Ghat was inscribed in World Heritage List in 2006. The inscribed property, situated in the capital city of Port Louis, comprises 1640 m² and there are two buffer zones (28.9 ha). Literally known as an “Immigration Depot”, Aapravasi Ghat is a place where indentured labourers, that is, contractual workers brought from abroad for a set term of service, disembarked before being sent to work on sugarcane plantations. The system of indentured labour was established in the Island of Mauritius after the abolition of slavery, when the British Government made it the place of the “Great Experiment” aimed at demonstrating the viability of “free” labour. The Immigration Depot was established in 1834 to introduce this new labour system copied later to different areas in the world. In Aapravasi Ghat more than 450,000 indentured workers from India landed in Mauritius. It is estimated that during the 19th and 20th centuries more than 2,000,000 indentures from different areas of the world were imported by the British, French and Dutch colonial powers to work on their sugarcane plantations in the world.

The history of indentured labour in Mauritius lasted from 1834 to 1911. Nevertheless, the area where the Immigration Depot is located had an earlier history dating back to the French period. The uses of this area during the British period were in continuity with its past uses by the French settlers, who had built a port there in 1732. During the French period, artisans and sailors from India and West Africa were brought to work in Trou Fanfaron (zone 1) and lived in what is now the buffer zone 2. Today, the Aapravasi Ghat maintains and manifests the spatial continuity of this historic period. This is why the remains of the Immigration Depot bear a significant value. The initial setting of the site and its uses were also modified at various times in history to accommodate or accompany new infrastructures and changes in the labour system. Thus, the construction of the railway line in 1864 deeply modified the morphology of the Depot, and the end of the indentured labour system in 1923 allowed for re-uses of the area.

The construction of the railway station in 1970 and the motorway in 1980, which threatened the integrity of the Depot, alerted some residents of Port Louis of the importance of acting for the preservation of the Site. The local authorities declared the Site a National Monument in 1987. In 1988, the Aapravasi Ghat was vested to the Ministry of Culture. A legal framework for the development and management of the Site, called the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF), was established in 2001. Aapravasi Ghat was finally inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2006.

In its decision 35 COM 7B.41, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to invite the joint UNESCO/ ICOMOS mission in order “to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Planning Policy Guidance in sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the property”. The decision follows the work of previous decisions (34 COM 7B.49 and 35 COM 7B.41) which underlined areas of concerns that needed response to enhance the management of the Site and protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Property.

In this report, the mission emphasises three crucial issues, namely the process of preparation of appropriate instruments for the management system; the mechanisms of its implementation; and issues that may adversely affect the OUV of the Property. It also identifies areas which need the enhanced attention of the State Party to boost the implementation of the proposed tools. It further underlines issues of observation to strategically safeguard the OUV of the Site, namely accessibility to the Core zone, connectivity between the Core zone and the buffer zone 2 and the development of the buffer zone 2.

Based on the observation and findings during the mission, it is recommended that the conservation and management of the Property and the protection of its Outstanding Universal Value be ensured in five steps:

1. Reinforce the technical Capacity of the Municipality

Today, the Municipality does not have technical capacity to deal with problems related to the conservation of historic buildings. The mission recommends the establishment of a technical section to deal with the conservation and the enhancement of the planning section to deal with heritage management.

2. Summarise Heritage Management Plan

It is advised to summarise the Heritage Management Plan of the buffer zone 2 to get a handy, short and user-friendly booklet for public users at large. This will also help to fill the existing gap of information and reinforce the awareness of the public on heritage, conservation and management.

3. Build the capacity of the National Heritage Fund

The National Heritage Fund is a custodian of cultural heritage in Mauritius. The State Party should take special initiative, in collaboration with Advisory bodies, to build the capacity of the NHF staff at ICCROM, CHDA or EPA.

4. Organise a meeting on HERITAGE and ECONOMY

The mission recommends the organisation of an international meeting in Port Louis to foster dialogue about the connected issues of Heritage and Economy in Mauritius. This occasion will offer an opportunity to show examples on how heritage is a viable alternative for the development for historic town.

5. Re-Structure the Consultative meetings

A consultative meeting is one of the last levels of the structural framework for the management of the Property. In such meetings, local inhabitants, residents and stakeholders meet with local authorities. To give an ownership of the Site to the inhabitants, these meetings should be organized on a regular basis and on fixed dates.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

1.1 Inscription History

Aapravasi Ghat was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006. The property is situated in the heart of Port Louis, the capital of the Republic of Mauritius. Known as an Immigration Depot, Aapravasi Ghat was a disembarkation area where, under the indentured labour system, more than 450,000 contractual workers, mainly of Indian origin, put their first foot on the island. The inscribed property covers a total area of 1640 m² and a buffer zone area of 28.9 hectares. To ensure an adequate and strategic protection of the inscribed property, the buffer zone has been divided into two layers.

The first layer, buffer zone 1, covers a total area of 2.9 hectares enclosing the World Heritage property and the oldest monuments on the island, such as the Military hospital and the Post office built in 1740 and 1868 respectively. The second layer, buffer zone 2, surrounds the inscribed property and the buffer zone 1 over a total area of 26 hectares. This area includes a part of the harbour on the north and, on the south, an important part of a commercial zone, a market area, the China town and a residential quarter. (Fig. 1).

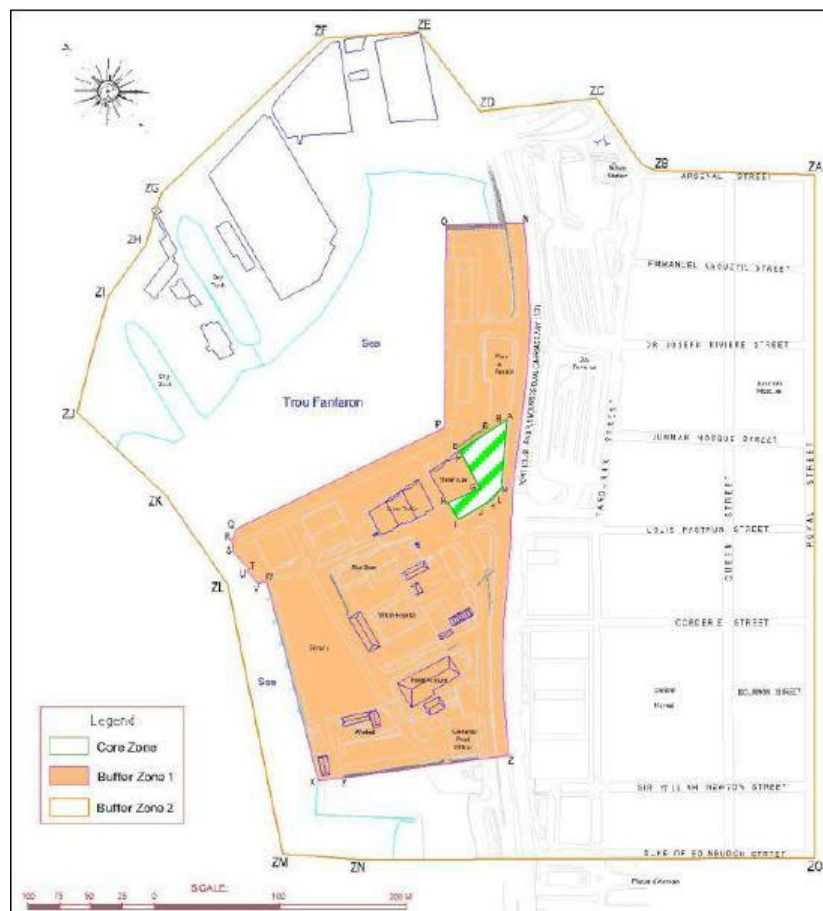


Fig.1. Aapravasi Ghat with buffer zones (source: AGTF)

Following the abolition of slavery by the British Empire in 1843, the British Government made Mauritius the site of the “**Great Experiment**” aimed at demonstrating the viability of “free contract labour”. This system, replacing slavery, was due to be a new source of affordable human labour to supply the demand from tropical plantation economies. Indentured labourers had come before this experiment, yet the scale of this experiment contributed to a tremendous increase in newcomers. In total, British authorities distributed more than 1.2 million indentures in its different immigration depots worldwide. It is estimated that nearly half a million contractual workers from India

heritage, or National Monument, in 1987. The site was vested to the Ministry of Culture in 1988. Some of the renovation works initiated in 1999 provoked a reaction that led to the establishment of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) in 2001 as a legal framework for the development and management of the site. This act led also to the idea of seeking international recognition of Aapravasi Ghat as a World Heritage property.

Aapravasi Ghat was put in the Tentative List in 2003. Its dossier was submitted in 2005 for inscription. Based on the findings and challenges on the management of the site, in 2006, during the 30th World Heritage Committee in Vilnius, ICOMOS recommended the dossier to be deferred to the List. The World Heritage Committee inscribed the Site under criteria (vi).

1.2 Criteria and World Heritage Values

The nomination dossier of the Aapravasi Ghat was proposed with two criteria of inscription, namely criteria (iv) and (vi). Mauritius was the first country to experiment the “Great experience”; for that reason, the State Party considered also that the Immigration Depot holds, in its architecture and setting, values that were exploited in many other British colonies in the World.

However, the World Heritage Committee, in its decision **WHC-06/30 COM 8B.33**, inscribed the site under criteria (vi). Hence it recognises the significance of the indentured labour system and its influence in both economic and social domains. The following declaration states the Outstanding Value of the site:

“Aapravasi Ghat, as the first site chosen by the British Government in 1834 for the „Great Experiment“ in the use of indentured, rather than slave labour, is strongly associated with memories of almost half a million indentured labourers moving from India to Mauritius to work on sugar cane plantations or to be trans-shipped to other parts of the World.”

1.3 Examination of the state of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau

In the evaluation report, the State Party was particularly advised to improve the management system of the Site. The report also pointed out the need to enhance the Heritage Management plan to include the following: development and conservation plan of the buffer zone and archaeological and tourism strategies. Similarly, the report underlined the need to regularise the restoration works that took place in the Site.

Since 2006, all reports on the State of the Conservation of the property (**2011, 2012**) and all decisions made by the World Heritage Committee have examined and highlighted development and gaps on the heritage Management system of the inscribed property and its buffer zones. In its two decisions, 34 COM 7B.49 and 35 COM 7B.41, the World Heritage Committee specifies further the areas on which more input were needed to enhance the management of the Site. These decisions pointed also concerns on recent developments of the buffer zone 2 that may adversely affect the outstanding value of the property. Two issues were underlined: lack of a structure

of stakeholders to implement the conservation manual plan and continued demolition of historic buildings in the buffer zones 2. Within this context, the present reactive monitoring mission was carried out.

1.4 Justification of the mission

Following the decision made by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011) and as is described in the Operation Guideline for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the State Party was requested to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to assess the implementation of the conservation and management tools put in place. The present document is the report of the mission that took place from 19th to 23rd March 2012 made in the response to the decision 35COM 7B.41. The terms of reference and the programme including the list of the people met during the mission are provided in Annexes 1 and 2.

Aapravasi Ghat and its buffer Zone



Buffer zone 2



Aapravasi Ghat



Buffer zone 2

2. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY IN MAURITIUS

2.1 Protected area legislation in Mauritius

Similar to many British colonies, the protected area legislation in Mauritius owes its background to the concept of “Monument”. In Mauritius, the first law passed in relation to the protection of “cultural heritage” was the Ancient Monument Act of 1938. This law set up an “Ancient Monument Advisory Body” whose role was to identify and select monuments to be gazetted for protection under the Act. In 1944, the new Ancient Monument and Natural Resource Board was set up to follow the same policy. Under this Act, the names of several monuments were published each year in the Governmental Gazette.

In the 1980’s, local authorities in Mauritius initiated an important reform in relation to the protection of cultural heritage. Increased threats posed to the Aapravasi Ghat also greatly contributed to rising awareness of the need to protect cultural heritage on the island. The ancient Monument Act was reviewed and the National Monument Act was enacted in 1985. The new Act established also a board to designate and maintain national monuments. Meanwhile, concerns such as the gap between policy and reality in the protection of monuments, the lack of maintenance thereof and the biases in the selection criteria grounded necessary arguments to reform the National Monument Act. During the same period, in 1987, the Aapravasi Ghat was declared a National Monument. In 1988, the responsibility for the site was given to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. The land on which the property is situated is governmental land.

In the 1990’s, the Government of Mauritius made another important step toward the building of a comprehensive strategy for the protection of its National Monuments by enacting a new legislation: the National Heritage Trust Fund Act of 1995. For the first time, the new legislation mentioned the notion of heritage, which included intangible heritage. The reform created a better framework to enhance the management of monuments and to finance its maintenance cost. As far as the protection of the Aapravasi Ghat is concerned, a milestone was reached in 2001 with the creation of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF). The AGTF intensified works for the conservation and management of the Property, for the supervision of archaeological work and for researches on the indentured labour system.

The awareness of the protection of cultural heritage and the need to enhance the role of indentured and slave labour in the development of the national heritage encouraged a new reform. In 2003, a National Heritage Fund Act 2003 was passed to replace the two previous legislations: the National Monument Act of 1985 and the National Heritage Trust Fund Act of 1997. The NHF Act considered also the need to harmonise the local legislation on heritage protection and international conventions.

Yet, as far as the management and protection of the Aapravasi Ghat and its buffer zones are concerned, other legislations also deal with specific issues in the buffer

zones area, namely, the Port Act; The Local Government Act; The Planning and Development Act, and the Environment Protection Act.

2.2 Institution framework

Under the Ministry of Arts and Culture, three institutions are responsible for the protection and management of the heritage culture in Mauritius namely, the National Heritage Fund; Aapravasi Ghat Thrust Fund and Le Morne Trust Fund. Nationally, the National Heritage Fund (NHF) is in charge of protecting heritage and culture. The NHF mandate is “to identify sites, monuments, structures, intangible heritage or such other objects of cultural significance to be designated as National heritage”. It has, therefore, the responsibility to establish and maintain the register of National heritage. However, to ensure the protection and management of Aapravasi Ghat, the local authorities have created the “Aapravasi Ghat Thrust Fund” (2011) and, for the Le Morne, the “Le Morne Trust Fund” (2004).

2.3 Management System for the World Heritage property and buffer zones

The management system for the World Heritage property and its buffer zones is handled at three levels. At the upper level, there is the World Heritage Steering Committee. The Hon. Prime Minister is the Chairperson of this committee which encompasses important ministries such as the Ministry of Arts and Culture, the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Tourism to name a few. Below this level, there

is a management committee. The chairperson of AGTF is the head of the management committee for the inscribed property. There is also technical committee to advise the management committee of the property. The third level is the Consultative Committee assembling stakeholders, inhabitants and residents of Port Louis.



1. Photo. Conservation works that need to be flagged to the public at large

2.4 Response to the recognition of values under international treaties and programmes

Initiatives for cooperation, especially in research, with countries in the region took place through AGTF. ICOMOS India has been also active in helping the State Party work for the conservation of the Site.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES

3.1 Issues identified during the mission and assessment

Like any World Heritage Property, the Aapravasi Ghat is faced with challenges in the protected area and in the buffer zones. In comparison to other properties, The Aapravasi Ghat has this specificity that it has been separated from its buffer zone 2. The setting of the two areas, their instruments of conservation and their management structures require a complex approach. In its observation, firstly, the mission distinguishes between issues that concern conservation and management and issues that need special attention. It also distinguishes the issues of the inscribed property to that of buffer zone 2. Concerning conservation and management, the mission considered three issues, namely, the management of buffer zones; the conservation of historic buildings; and development of capacity for the conservation and management of the Site. Concerning issues that need special attention, the mission observed also three issues: accessibility to the World Heritage property, connectivity it and Buffer zone 2 and development of Buffer zone 2. All of these issues are in buffer zone 2.

3.1.1 Management of the buffer zone

The most crucial issue already addressed in many reports concerns the management of the buffer zones, especially buffer zone 2. The mission observed two issues in the management of this buffer zone: the compression of the idea of historic city; the implementation of concrete measures when it comes to the management of buffer zone 2 as an urban area next to the Central Business District (CBD) of Port Louis.

Observations made during the mission show that many stakeholders do not consider the buffer zone 2 as a part of the “historic city”. For them, and as the morphology of the town shows, the buffer zone 2 is a continuity of the CBD of Port Louis. This understanding has its consequences. It encourages certain processes of development which adversely affects the setting of the buffer zone as a historic setting of the capital. The demolition of important historic buildings, random location parking areas and the construction of high-rise buildings for offices and commercial spaces are examples of such adverse development. For a sustainable management of the buffer zones, quick and concrete actions need to be taken to address this issue.

Again, another consequence of the lack of common understanding is the weakness of the implementation of the management plan. The daily management of the buffer zone is under the corresponding Municipality. Yet, compared to other stakeholders, officers of the Municipality have a poor comprehension and low expectations regarding the role and significance of heritage for the development of Port Louis. Some believe that the best way to develop Port Louis, especially buffer zone 2, is to increase the number of high-rise buildings for office and commercial spaces. In this situation, persuading other stakeholders, especially inhabitants and residents, to protect significant values of the area is challenging. The construction of the new interpretation centre will prove significant to increase activities on awareness raising, particularly in terms of the conservation and management of the World Heritage property and its buffer zones.

3.1.2 Conservation of historic buildings

The second issue identified during the mission is the lack of adequate competence for the conservation and maintenance of historic buildings. Development in the urban areas of Port Louis has been made through new constructions, with a predominant tendency to demolish historic buildings to pave the way for development. The development of the Seafront Promenade of Port Louis (Cordon), an important commercial and social area of Port Louis, was based on a plan for conservation, restoration and space re-uses. However, Cordon appears as a completely newly constructed area of commercial spaces disconnected from any historical heritage because the principles of heritage conservation were not adequately flagged. There are good conservation works accomplished in Port Louis, they need to be exposed and highlighted for large public awareness.



2 Photo: Challenge of conservation to the Aapravasi Ghat

Hindrance to good conservation, however, lies in the absence of technical capacity for conservation and maintenance within the Municipality and the National Heritage Fund. A strategy is needed to fill this gap. The local authorities could start by engaging one competent person skilled in conservation and protection who would work within the service of Municipality. This person would offer advice to the inhabitants or residents to increase their awareness of on the conservation of their historic buildings and related issues.

3.1.3 Development of capacity

A long-term solution to the above-mentioned issues relates to capacity building. It is advised that some staff from the Municipality and the National Heritage Fund participate in different courses offered in institutions such as ICCROM, CHDA and EPA. A combined strategy between institutions dealing with heritage and the “Orders of Architects in Mauritius” may also influence young professionals to specialize in conservation. The University of Mauritius is also planning to open a course on Heritage

Management, where the idea of conservation and management of historic buildings or urban conservation can be introduced for the staff of heritage institutions. In addition to addressing capacity building needs, adequate staffing needs to be ensured for the conservation and management of the property.

3.2 Factors affecting the property

The setting of Aapravasi Ghat is grouped in three layers (Core zone, Buffer Zone 1 and Buffer Zone 2) and divided into two parties, the inscribed property's side and buffer Zone 2's side. To facilitate the full experience of the Immigration Depot, it is required to enable both physical and mental accessibility against the existing layers and divides in order to fully imagine the process of indentured labour system and the life of workers. This is where the tangible and intangible value of the property connects and why the Aapravasi Ghat has been inscribed under criteria (vi). It is also a justification why the buffer zone 2 plays a significant role in understanding the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property. The current situation does not fully allow this experience.

3.2.1 Accessibility to the Core zone

The accessibility to the Core zone is still problematic. The quick and most comfortable ways to access the Core zone is by vehicle. Access also depends on the time of a day. How will the pedestrian access to the Core zone when the interpretation centre will be opened? This problem is far beyond the scope of the AGTF but it needs mobilisation and strategy to reduce its hindering impact.

The mission had the opportunity to be informed of the future development plan of the whole area that will enhance the accessibility and connectivity from buffer zone 2 to the inscribed property. But before this plan is realized, the local authority could improve the current path and pedestrian ways to the Aapravasi Ghat to make it a more comfortable and user-friendly walkway. Furthermore, the local authority should also exploit the opportunity of the new project of the National Art Gallery to ensure that accessibility to the Aapravasi Ghat becomes one of the criteria of selection of the best project proposals.

3.2.2 The connectivity between the inscribed property and Buffer zone 2

One of the important challenges of the management of the Aapravasi Ghat today is the connectivity between the inscribed property and the buffer zone 2. The Immigration Depot has been divided into two parties since 1864. However, the social and physical relations between the two parties were strong. New developments since 1980's have enhanced this "divide" and contributed to completely isolate the World Heritage property. Combining this process and the phenomena of the departure of the original residents of Port Louis, buffer zones 2 slowly loses its animated social life. This process influences the current perception that this town area is in transition towards changes similar to the existing Central Business District (CBD) of Port Louis.

The inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on the World Heritage List is an opportunity to sustain the historic area of Port Louis. However, some developers or administrators who are in favour of a process of “modernity” conceived in opposition to heritage conservation do not support this idea. Observations made during the mission shows that the buffer zone 2 is at a crossroads. The success of new ideas concerning the connection between heritage and development depends on the conviction and efforts of the local authorities. It also relies upon the reestablishment a strong connectivity between buffer zone 2 and the Immigration Depot without which visitors miss the full experience of the site and the understanding of the attributes that sustain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Aapravasi Ghat is a disembarkation place but the real life and experience of indentured labourers took place in the buffer zones, especially buffer zone 2. The fact that a new planning scheme of Port Louis in favour of making some areas of Port Louis “heritage and conservation area” will soon be introduced is a positive initiative that needs to be encouraged and supported.

3.2.3 Development of Buffer zone 2

It will take time to regain the experience of the life of 1980's in the buffer zone 2. While process of enhancing the continuity and accessibility is going on, one has to make sure that the development in the buffer zone 2 is also conducive to community life. One of the important planning problems of the town of Port Louis today is the difference in the “quality of life” during and after office hours. Port Louis is among the few capitals where social and community life of the town drops completely after 5pm. This situation threatens the security of the town-dwellers.



3 Photo : Challenge of accessibility to the Aapravasi Ghat

The change of the quality of life in the capital is one of the reasons why this town has gradually lost its residents in favour of peripheries. New development processes in buffer zone 2 will either correct this tendency or accentuate it. This depends on the type of projects that will be encouraged therein. It is crucial to encourage developments which favour community life, whereas today's tendency still favours more offices and commercial spaces.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE SITE

4.1. Reviewing whether the values on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List are being maintained

The Aapravasi Ghat was inscribed under criteria (vi):

“Aapravasi Ghat, as the first site chosen by the British Government in 1834 for the „Great Experiment“ in the use of indentured, rather than slave labour, is strongly associated with memories of almost half a million indentured labourers moving from India to Mauritius to work on sugar cane plantations or to be trans-shipped to other parts of the World.”

The Property is well protected and managed to safeguard its Outstanding Universal Value. The State Party has also make effort to put in place the necessary instruments to ensure that buffer zone 2 maintains its value. For a better analysis of the situation, the report will examine separately different issues which need attention to enhance the state of conservation of the World Heritage property and of the buffer zones

4.2. Conservation of the inscribed property

The state of conservation of the Aapravasi Ghat is very good. Currently, two important works are going on in the Core zone area. The first work concerns the re-use, adaptively, of the warehouse adjacent to the Aapravasi Ghat to make the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre; the second is the inventory of the stonewall before its restoration. The mission considers that the proposed development addresses an important need in terms of having an adequate Interpretation Centre for the property. The location is adequate and no problems are foreseen with its development. The mission notes that the rehabilitation of the unused warehouses is compatible with the property and in accordance to its Outstanding Universal Value.

These works are supervised by qualified experts and by the AGTF as well as the NHF. The mission had an opportunity to visit both working sites. These works are known and do not have any adversely impact on the value of the property.

When it comes to the buffer zones, the mission did not observe any new important construction or conservation issues. There are areas where houses were demolished but these are old cases. It seems that the revision of the legislation concerning the demolition has been effective. Again, with the coming in force of the Planning Policy Guidance, many inhabitants are waiting to start new developments. Existing high-rise buildings date back to the implementation of PPG. This instrument has been passed very recently; it is therefore difficult to evaluate its effectiveness at this moment. Nevertheless, it seems that inhabitants and developers are waiting to see its implementation mechanism through the Technical Committee.

4.3. Management system of the Aapravasi Ghat

The evaluation report underlines three points concerning the property, namely the management issue, the plan for development of the buffer zone and the plan for conservation of historic buildings. The report evokes also tourism and restoration work

on the property. The two decisions of the World Heritage Committee 34 COM 7B.49 and 35 COM 7B.41 have reiterated the same demand by emphasising the necessity of having tools that will facilitate the management and conservation of the Site and its buffer zones



4 Photo: Inventory of the stones of the wall before a restoration work

It was therefore clear from the beginning that the state of the conservation of the property will depend mainly on the availability of the instruments of the management system and on the establishment of a clear structural framework for implementation. For this, three instruments were important: the management plan, the conservation and manual plan, and the development plan for the buffer zone 2. The implementation of these tools depends on structural framework and on the legal framework. Hence, following legislations have been amended to facilitate the implementation: National Trust Fund Act; Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act, and Local Government Act.

It is fair to say and acknowledge that since 2006, important work has been realised by the State Party to conserve and protect the inscribed property and to respond to the demand of the World Heritage Committee. The State Party has put all its effort to prepare tools for the management system. The process went in parallel with the review of legislations and formulation structure framework for implementation.

4.3.1. Instruments and review of legislation

Three important instruments have been prepared: the Heritage Management Plan for both Core zone and buffer zones 2; the development plan for the buffer zone 2, and a Policy Planning Guidance (PPG). The latter consist in a special planning tool used in Mauritius. The State Party also prepared a development plan which came with the concept of “conservation area” and areas of specific interest for protection. The mission has also been informed on the on-going process of reviewing the local Planning

Schemes for the Town of Port Louis which has also put a lot of emphasis on the heritage protection and conservation of buffer zone 2. The implementation of these tools and review as progress is made will be significant to the conservation and management of the inscribed property and its buffer zones.

4.3.2. Structural framework

This comprehensive and inclusive team of technicians from different ministries works for the development of the buffer zones. Under the leadership of Lord Mayor, the team endeavours to advise the Municipal council on the development of the buffer zone 2. Before the Municipality issues a permit, a project is examined by the committee to ensure its conformity to the PPG and to other legal frameworks of the buffer zone 2.

4.4. Implementation of the tools of management and conservation

It is very early to talk of the success of the implementation of the tools and the efficiency of the structural framework. The State Party has to be encouraged to continue its effort to implement these instruments.

Nevertheless, the mission wants to highlight issues which are currently not necessarily critical, but which deserve attention in the near future so as to pave the way for a better protection and management of the inscribed property and its buffer zones. These issues are: implementation mechanisms; the notion of historic city; financial incentives; technique of conservation and economic advantages of heritage.

4.4.1. Implementation mechanism

The role of the technical committee is to advise the Municipality by examining all important aspects of the project before issuing the building permit. Legally, the Municipal council is the only authority that is issuing the building permit. Knowing that the municipality does not have a conservation unit and that the experience planner who was dealing with issue of heritage was transferred to other municipal councils, following a normal administrative procedure in Mauritius by which a civil servant can be transferred to other stations of work, the role of the Technical Committee will be crucial.

Yet, for increased efficiency, the technical committee should also advise inhabitants to do monitoring and controlling. All of these are the legal mandate of the Municipal council. It will therefore be a challenge to enforce any implementation process if the Municipality does not have technical competency. The Municipality should be encouraged and supported to have its own team that will work with the newly established Technical Committee.

4.4.2. Technique of Conservation

The presence of a technical unit within the Municipality will also help fill the gap of the demand for technicians specialized in conservation. A special effort has to be made to increase the number of professionals and artisans in the field of conservation in Mauritius. The Municipal council and the National Heritage Fund also need to consider

training its staff in the field of conservation. It is crucial that, when the inhabitants of the buffer zone 2 need technical advice, they find competent technicians in front of them. The lack of proper information and technical competencies from the official authorities will drive inhabitants to looking for other alternatives, which may be destructive.

4.4.3. Concept of Historic city

For different reasons, the inhabitants of Mauritius do not consider Port Louis a historic city. Such a discrepancy between local perceptions and the necessities of an adequate heritage protection complicates the management and conservation work in the buffer zone 2. Instead of “conservation”, it is the word “demolition” which is recurrently used in Port Louis. To facilitate heritage and conservation work in buffer zone 2, one needs therefore to change the biased existing perception of the nature of Port Louis.



5 Photo: Typical situation of buffer zone 2 where commercial activities, historic building and new construction need to be harmonized together

Port Louis is not only a historic city but also a good example where the approach set in the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) recommendation could be applied. A critical analysis of the setting of the town also shows that the existing demarcation of the buffer zone may create problems. A typical example of it is the limit of the buffer zone 2 that cuts across the China town and split it in two parts. Again, the absence of natural borders may create a situation where one wonders why a historic building situated in one side of a street needs to be examined through all conservation tools proposed in the management system while another building just the opposite side, which has similar or even greater values, should just be considered as a simple building because it falls out of the demarcation street.

The proposed idea of using the concept of conservation area in the development plan is one way of avoiding this illogical interpretation of the buffer zone. The exploitation of the methodology of HUL will also help to consider neighbourhoods, such as the China town, as one landscape or a setting that needs a comprehensive planning and development.

4.4.4. Financial Incentive

Some inhabitants of Port Louis blame the local authorities for refusing to consider financial incentive as a tool for encouraging conservation and enhancing the management of the buffer zone. Mauritius has a long experience of incentive packages though different system. One of the systems, referred to by stakeholders during discussions, is called the Cooperate Social Responsibility (CSR). Considering the actual situation of the buffer zone 2 and the reluctance of the inhabitants to embrace the idea of conservation of their historic buildings, the government should consider the option. The mission had the opportunity to learn that the Ministry of Culture and Arts is also working for the idea and this should be further promoted.

4.4.5. Economic advantage of heritage

Many stakeholders of Port Louis are not aware, sometimes even dubious, of the potential economic benefits of a heritage site. Some developers of Port Louis even perceive heritage as an obstacle to local economic development. To enhance the management and conservation of the buffer zone 2 and to change the perceptions of the inhabitants of the historic area regarding the relation between the historic value of their town and development, it is required that the economic potentials of heritage be demonstrated and understood by all stakeholders. The State Party should lead the process by organising meetings and workshops to induce a large-scale change of perception and understanding of the links between heritage and development.

Landscape of the Apravasi Ghat and its buffer zones



Apravasi Ghat and the CBD of Port Louis behind



Challenges of empty spaces left after demolition



Life of the commercial area after working hours

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The Monitoring Mission to the Aapravasi Ghat in Mauritius was organised from 19th to 23rd 2012. It follows the demand of the World Heritage Committee to the State Party, decision 35 COM 7B.41 to invite the conjoint mission of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS “to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Planning Policy Guidance in sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the property”. The decision 35 COM 7B.41 also reiterates concerns stated in previous decisions (34 COM 7B.49 and 35 COM 7B.41) to enhance the management system of the Site and to protect the Property from development processes that may adversely affect its Outstanding Universal Value. The objective and scope of the mission are detailed in the Terms of Reference (see attachment).

Aapravasi Ghat is a World Heritage Property inscribed in the World Heritage List since 2006. Also known as Immigration Depot, this Site is composed of a Core Zone of 1640 m² and two buffer zones covering a total area of 28.9 hectares. The setting of the Site includes a part of the harbour on the north, and the buffer zone 2 on the south includes an important part of the commercial zone, the market area, the China town and the residential quarters. The Immigration Depot was a disembarkation place where more than 450,000 contractual workers or indentured labourers mainly coming from India landed on the Island of Mauritius during the Great Experiment when the British Government aimed at demonstrating the greater effectiveness and superior virtue of “free contract labour” over slavery.

In this report, the mission highlights the assessment of three elements, namely the preparation of the instruments for the management system; the mechanism of its implementation; and the presence or not of any issues that may adversely affect the OUV of the Property. Concerning instruments, one needs to acknowledge the effort realised by the State Party to put in place significant tools for the conservation and management of the Property. Apart from the Heritage Management Plan for the Core zone and buffer zones, four major instruments have been prepared for a better management of the Sites. These are the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), the Development Plan for the buffer zone 2, the Conservation Manuel plan and finally the Local Planning Scheme of Port Louis which is under the last phase of its preparation. All these tools enhance the protection of the Core zone but, most important, recognise the significant of the buffer zone 2 and the need for its protection.

Concerning implementation, the institutional framework has been enhanced by the creation of a Technical Committee. This committee is composed of a team of professionals from different ministries who meet to discuss a project before the Municipal council issues the permit. Furthermore, the process of the preparation for the new instruments and institution framework went in parallel with the procedure of the revision of the legal framework. Three laws were reviewed to integrate new developments. The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act was reviewed to allow better legal protection of the buffer zone. The Heritage Trust Fund Act was reviewed earlier and the Local Government Act now recognises the Technical Committee as an official framework to work with the Municipality in the implementation of the PPG.

When it comes to elements concerned with the conservation and management of the Property, the mission's observations revealed two main areas which need the special attention of the State Party for a better implementation of the proposed tools. Firstly, the mission noted that there is a lack of understanding of the concept of "historic town" in Mauritius. This situation introduces confusion in what can be possibly done in the buffer zone 2. Without a common understanding and ambition, this gap may create the illusion that one group - developers and inhabitants - is promoting economic development within modernity while another - administrator and heritage professionals - is a favour of "conservatism". A common understanding will help to build an environment of trust and facilitate dialogue. Secondly, conservation needs competent artisans or professionals who can do conservation work. The municipal council and the NHF should build the capacity of its staff and enable them to advise residents on conservation work. There should be also strategy to increase the number of professionals, notably conservation architects, available on the labour market. During its presence, the mission did not observe or hear any new case of demolition or construction of high-rise building.

When it comes to issues that may or not adversely affect the OUV of the property, three important points were also underpinned, namely accessibility to the inscribed property, connectivity between the inscribed property and buffer zone 2 and the development of buffer zone 2. Today, it is difficult to access the World Heritage property as a pedestrian. But the connectivity between the inscribed property and buffer zone 2 is also problematic. The mission is very much aware that the two issues are complex, and beyond the scope of AGTF. Its solutions also need a long-term strategy. Yet, they necessitate attention and observation by local authorities for monitoring in the long term. The significant values of buffer zone 2 go beyond its spatial structure. These values are also social and anthropological. The social morphology of the buffer zone needs to be maintained. For this to be achieved, one needs also to observe and encourage development projects that will be conducive to the community life more than to commercial and office spaces.

The mission proposes the following recommendations to enhance the conservation and management of the property and to protect its Outstanding Universal Value.

5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1. Reinforce the technical capacity of the Municipality

The inscription of a Property to the World Heritage List is always a pride and a chance for a State Party. The inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat follows the rule. More than that, the inscription of the Immigration Depot has gradually introduced new outlooks onto the way the local authority of Mauritius views the town of Port Louis. Instilling deeply the conception that Port Louis is a historic city, with all its historic landscapes, still requires a radical change of perception and the introduction of a methodology that help build a new vision for the future metropolis of Port Louis. Special efforts need to be made to raise existing obstacles, observed in the poor understanding of heritage protection and the lack of technical capacity, posed to the capacity to embrace this new perception of heritage and the historic city. UNESCO's initiative and ICOMOS's principles on the

concept of Historic Urban Landscape are important guidelines to deal with the situation in Port Louis historic city.

The state of conservation of the buffer zones depends completely upon the capacity of the Municipal council to respond to the technical and advisory demands of Port Louis town-dwellers. Today, the Municipality does not have that capacity. As was clearly expressed during a Consultative Committee stakeholders meeting, the absence of respond to the questions raised by inhabitants, residents or stakeholders hinders their endeavour and commitment for the conservation and management of the buffer zone 2. Such lack of close dialogue is proof that the local authorities have not yet defined and adopted any informed, effective and pro-active heritage management plan based upon a clear and precise understanding of heritage protection. With regard to this situation, it is firstly advised that a technical unit dealing with conservation and management be established inside the Municipality. This unit would work in collaboration with the Technical Committee. A second crucial step is that the planning unit of the Municipality should have staffs that are more conversant with heritage issues. Some local authorities in Mauritius employ competent planners who can be relocated, temporarily, in Port Louis. Lastly, to insure the ownership of the process by the Municipality of Port Louis, it is advisable that the trained staff of Port Louis should not be transferred frequently, as it happened in the past.

5.2.2. Summarise Heritage Management Plan

Over the last five years, the State Party worked actively to put in place instruments for the conservation and management of the Property and its buffer zones (Management Plan; Conservation Manual; Planning Policy Guidance; development Plan; and Local Planning Scheme). These technical documents, especially the Heritage Management Plan of the buffer zone 2, are abundant with in-depth and practical information which, unfortunately, are difficult of access to most stakeholders. Consequently, it is advised that the Heritage Management Plan of the buffer zone 2 be summarised and printed as a short, handy, and user-friendly booklet for public users. This will help to fill the existing gap of information available to public users as well as reinforce awareness of heritage to the public at large.

5.2.3. Build capacity of the National Heritage Fund

The National Heritage Fund is responsible for the protection of cultural heritage in Mauritius. In this regard, it is crucial for the NHF to have competent technical staff. The State Party should make special effort and launch initiative, in collaboration with Advisory bodies, to enrol some staff of the NHF to special courses at ICOM, CHDA or EPA. These institutions provide basic courses for the management of heritage sites that would contribute to train the NHF staff adequately.

5.2.4. Organize a meeting on HERITAGE and ECONOMY

The inhabitants of Port Louis, and some officials of the Municipality, are reluctant to embrace heritage and commit for its protection. This reluctance comes from the anxiety that protecting heritage may halt their legitimate aspiration of making Port Louis a modern city. High-rise buildings, sometimes even heavy traffic, are seen as symbols of

a modern city. It is crucial to provide in-depth information and raise-awareness to help correct and revise such dichotomist understandings of heritage vs. modernity.

Furthermore, Port Louis is an expanding city with complex social and spatial morphologies. But since the early 1980's, this capital is gradually losing its residents for various reasons. The lower quality of life in the buffer zone 2 is one of them, which results from the absence of social life in the town after working hours. The current trend of development which gives priority to office and commercial spaces has intensified this trend. The situation appears crucial and even "dangerous" in some areas.

In the process of development of historic cities, what happened in Port Louis is banal yet it necessitates action. The most important challenging factor in Port Louis is the demolition of the "historic setting" that will make it difficult for the town to re-appropriate its historic context. The mission recommends the organisation of international meetings in Port Louis to discuss the connection between Heritage and Economy based upon examples of how other towns managed to protect their heritage and foster economic development, if not foster economic development through heritage protection. Such meetings should specifically be aimed at reflecting upon sustainable and economical viable alternatives for the development of the buffer zone 2 and Port Louis.

5.2.5. Re-Structure the Consultative meeting

A consultative meeting is one of the lower layers of the structural framework for managing a Property, whereby local inhabitants, residents and stakeholders meet to discuss town issues with local authorities. During this mission, on 22nd March 2012, one consultative meeting was organised to discuss with stakeholders. This level of consultation is very important to disseminate information and to consider stakeholders' opinions and positions. However, today, these Consultative meetings do not have fixed dates. They are organised randomly according to the agenda proposed by the local authorities. Considering the lack of information on the development of buffer zone 2, and considering also that such meetings are the only consultative space for the inhabitants and should be valued as such, the mission recommends to restructure the current system by fixing the dates of the meetings on a regular basis and well in advance. The local authority can use significant dates such as 18th March (Heritage Day) to organise these meetings. This will empower the inhabitants and given them the ownership of the process of heritage management and protection of their town.

6. ANNEXES:

6.1 ANNEXE 1:

Terms of Reference for the ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission to Aapravasi Ghat, Mauritius (C 122)

In accordance to **Decision 35 COM 7B.41** adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), the reactive monitoring mission shall fulfil the following tasks:

1. Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the state of conservation of the World Heritage property and identify the factors that can potentially threaten its Outstanding Universal value, with particular attention to:
 - a. State of conservation of historic buildings in the inscribed property;
 - b. Demolition of historic buildings in the buffer zone;
 - c. Development projects foreseen within the buffer zone and the setting of the property
2. Evaluate on-going and proposed projects and initiatives, including demolitions, rebuilding, new construction or reconstruction and extensive restoration projects within the property and its buffer zone which may impact its Outstanding Universal Value;
3. Review the status of any heritage impact assessments undertaken by the State Party, to consider the impact of the above-mentioned development works on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;
4. Review the status of monitoring and supervision mechanisms and of all components of the property;
5. Evaluate the efficacy and adequacy of the existing management system for the property, in particular:
 - a. Enforcement of legislative and regulatory frameworks;
 - b. Finalization and approval of the Integrated Management Plan;
 - c. Enforcement of Planning Policy Guidance;
 - d. Visitor management Plan;
 - e. Key management bodies, institutional arrangements, decision-making mechanisms and coordination among stakeholders;
 - f. Availability of institutional, technical and financial resources for the sustained implementation of measures to ensure the adequate protection, conservation and management of the property
6. Prepare a mission report, in English or French, incorporating the above findings and recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring Mission for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session. The report should follow the attached format and should be submitted the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS Headquarters in hard copy and an electronic version.

**ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to Aapravasi Ghat, Mauritius, from
Monday 19 to Friday 23 March, 2012**

<u>Sunday 18 March</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0940hrs 	Arrival at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and received by Mr Fareed Chuttan, Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Arts and Culture and Ms Corinne Forest, Head Technical Unit, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund.
<u>Monday 19 March</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1000hrs • 1030hrs • 1200hrs • 1300hrs • 1400hrs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with officials of Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund: Dr Vijaya Teelock, Chairperson and Mr Mohit, Officer in Charge • Working session at Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund with the research and technical team • Lunch • Visit to Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property • Visit to Aapravasi Ghat Buffer Zones
<u>Tuesday 20 March</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1000hrs • 1045hrs • 1230hrs • 1330hrs • 1500hrs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtesy call on Hon M. Choonee, Minister of Arts and Culture • Meeting with Municipal Council of Port Louis with the Lord Mayor, Dr Mahmad Aniff Kodabaccus • Lunch • Meeting with Mr S. Goburdhone, Director of Port Development, Mauritius Ports Authority • Site Visit at the harbor area of buffer zone 2 (Taylor Smith Ltd)
<u>Wednesday 21 March</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1000hrs • 1300hrs • 1330hrs • 1500hrs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Session with Technical Committee, Conference Room, MAC • Lunch • Courtesy call on Hon Hervé Aimé, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands • Meeting with officials of Ministry of Housing and Lands and the National Heritage Fund, Conference Room, MAC • Meeting with Alain Gordon-Gentil, Senior Adviser, Prime Minister's Office (Culture et Avenir)
<u>Thursday 22 March</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1000hrs • 1200hrs • 1400hrs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultative Committee, Projection Room, Film Classification Board, 1st floor, R. Seeneevassen Bldg, P.Louis • Lunch • Joint meeting with Ministry of Arts and Culture, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and Municipality of

	Port Louis, Conference Room, MAC.
<u>Friday 23 March</u>	PUBLIC HOLIDAY
<u>Saturday 24 March</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0830hrs • 1000hrs • 1200hrs • 2320hrs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave hotel • Visit to Le Morne Cultural Landscape • Lunch • Seen off and departure See off by Mr Fareed Chuttan and Ms Corinne Forest.