

PROGRESS REPORT ON STATE OF CONSERVATION OF OSUN-OSOGBO SACRED GROVE, OSOGBO, NIGERIA

STATE PARTY: NIGERIA
NAME OF PROPERTY: OSUN-OSOGBO SACRED GROVE
IDENTIFICATION: C1118
DATE OF INSCRIPTION: JULY 15, 2005
CRITERIA: II, III, VI

A. INTRODUCTION

Further to our report on the State of Conservation of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove; a World Heritage Site and the decision of the World Heritage Committee at the Thirty-eight session WHC – 14/38. COM/7B Add.

The State Party wishes to update the committee on the following areas that were not mentioned in the report of 28th February, 2014.

B. OVERALL CONSERVATION OF THE FOREST

FLORAL POPULATION

The current status of Osun-Osogbo rainforest remains intact. Its integrity has not been compromised in any form because the high forest which constitutes the largest portion of the grove has increased in the number of species from 400-465.

Some of these species are:

- a. *Bryscocarpus coccineus*
- b. *Gongronema latifolium*
- c. *Bligha sapida*
- d. *Spondia mombin*
- e. *Albizia zyga*
- f. *Celtis zenkeri*
- g. *Canthium hispidum*

This was achieved through plant regeneration and replanting in areas that were disturbed especially the former Islamic School converted to Heritage and Education Resource Centre. In addition, fifteen (15) medicinal rainforest plants species were also introduced into the forest as a way of increasing its medicinal value. These are;

- a. *Alstonia scholaris*
- b. *Chromolaena odorata*
- c. *Cosmos candata*
- d. *Glochidion luftenscens*
- e. *Viscum orientale*
- f. *Euphorbia hypericifolia*
- g. *Fagrae crassipes*
- h. *Lindsaea borneensio*
- i. *Gliricidia maculata*
- j. *Pruus arborea*
- k. *Nuclea subdita*
- l. *Mycetia javanica*
- m. *Smilax laevis*
- n. *Scaphium macropodium*
- o. *Melina spp*

The riparian forest and derived savannah areas are also been protected by constant monitoring by the patrol team.

The National Commission for Museums and Monuments in collaboration with the Forestry department of Osun State Ministry of Agriculture have intensified efforts on prevention of bush burning, lumbering, tree felling and other unwholesome activities in the grove.

We propose to undertake the retagging of the trees with more information for educational and research purposes.

FAUNAL POPULATION

The animal population has been prevented from leaving the secured and sacred grove by the provision of wire mesh boundaries around the entire acreage of the grove.

In order to further protect the animals, traffic barriers have been created on the tarmac road bisecting the grove before its eventual closure soon by the government. The regulations on hunting, poaching and killing of any animal in the grove are regularly enforced in conjunction with the communities surrounding the grove and Forestry department of Osun State Ministry of Agriculture. Because of these efforts, all the species of primates existing in the forest are well protected and flourishing. These are;

- a. *Cercopithecus erytrogaster*
- b. *Cercopithecus nictitans*
- c. *Cercocebus* spp
- d. *Manis tricuspis*
- e. *Tragelaphis spekei*
- f. *Artiodactyla* sp

It is noted that the African Rock Python (*Python sebae*) and Royal Python (*Python regius*) are still very rarely sighted in the grove.

RIVER OSUN

Although we earlier reported the pollution of Osun River as a result of the violation of drainage regulations in the city. This situation has improved remarkably because both the Federal and State Environmental and Sanitation Agencies have embarked on quarterly cleaning of the river. This quarterly cleaning of the river course and its banks will increase the population of the aquatic life and ensure the purity of the river as the waters of life.

C. RESTORATION OF SCULPTURES, STRUCTURES AND SHRINES

Within the grove, there are eighty-four (84) sculptures, fifty-four (54) structures, six (6) shrines, two (2) traditional palaces, one (1) traditional market and the pavilion. There are also sixteen (16) worship points along the river.

In 2013 – 2014, all the sixty-one (61) sculptures at the traditional market (Ohuntoto) were restored by the Sacred Art Movement in conjunction with National Commission for Museums and Monuments sponsored by Adunni Olorisa Trust (Trust Fund for Late Madame Sussane Wenger). During the same period, another important sculpture called **“Flying tortoise”** was restored. This sculpture use to be the traditional entrance to the grove from the visitors center at the main entrance to the festival route.

D. MANAGEMENT PROCESS

In accordance with UNESCO guidelines, a new Conservation Management Plan 2015 – 2019 was prepared for this property in December 2014. In addition to this, the Cultural Tourism Management Plan and Disaster Risk Preparedness Management plan have been prepared for the property in December 2014.

These new plans have addressed important issues that will assist in ameliorating impacts of developments and potential development that must be controlled. In as much as it is impossible to stop the festival as it is the foundation of the relationship between the Osogbo people and the grove, efforts have been made to address the over commercialization of the festival in the new plans.

National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) management and other stakeholders have agreed to create activity-specific zones in the grove for spiritual and symbolic activities that will protect and preserve the spirituality and sacredness of the grove. Other social activities associated with the festival will be

diverted to the buffer zones or less sensitive areas. In addition, 5% of funds realized from the festival will be used for conservation works in the grove.

All the above will protect the spiritual atmosphere, physical fragility and pristine nature of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove for posterity and maintain all its Outstanding Universal Values.

E. ICOMOS REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION

National Commission for Museums and Monuments will invite the ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to visit the property in year 2015 in order to consider with the State Party how approaches to urban development, cultural tourism management and the conservation of natural resources might be strengthened and ensure appropriate balance between conservation and development in relation to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove is Nigeria's second World Heritage Site inscribed in 2005 under criteria II, III, VI. Since inscription, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments has developed three Conservation Management Plans (2005 – 2009), (2010-2014) and a new one (2015-2019).

The highlights of the achievements of the previous activities have been strengthened and challenges ameliorated in the new Management Plan. While efforts undertaken to protect the Outstanding Universal Values of the property in the face of rapid development of the city of Osogbo and other projects embarked upon in line with the past Conservation Management Plans, are captured, new issues have been addressed in the new management plan.

In accordance with the UNESCO guidelines, the new Conservation Management Plan 2015 - 2019 is accompanied by Cultural Tourism Management Plan and Risk Preparedness Management Plan. It addresses:

- The sacredness and natural qualities of the grove, maintenance and protection of its spiritualism and symbolism in conjunction with the devotees, priests and priestesses of the different deities
- Continuous restoration of the sculptures, shrines and structures to sustain their authenticity
- Conservation and Protection of the natural properties of the grove comprising of floral and faunal population

Further:-

- The number of species of trees have increased from 400-465 through replanting, regeneration and monitoring
- Animals have been protected by creating traffic barriers on the tarmac road and provision of wire mesh boundaries around the grove
- Effects of over commercialization of the festival on site have been addressed whereby social activities will be diverted to buffer zone
- 5% of funds from festival will be used for conservation works