

Report on the State of Conservation
Cultural Landscape and Archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley
(2003, in Danger)

ID Number: Ref: C208rev

1. Response from Afghanistan to the World Heritage Committee's Decision 39 COM 7A.39

- a) Corrective measures taken by Afghanistan in reply to the World Heritage Committee's Decision(s)

Management Plan:

The Management Plan of the World Heritage Site of Bamiyan has been prepared by the government of Afghanistan in corporation with UNESCO Kabul office; this plan has been the subject of several meetings and discussion with local stakeholders in Bamiyan and international expert in periodical Bamiyan Expert Working Groups. In this frame the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture with the help of UNESCO has organized International Co-ordination Meetings in Bamiyan since 2011. The meetings provided a unique opportunity for Afghan Government Officials from different and related ministries and institutions (Bamiyan Governor Office, Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Aviation and Transport, Ministry of Public Works) to share their plans aiming protecting the world heritage site of Bamiyan. These coordination meetings are part of the structure of the management system in place in the Bamiyan Valley. The central and local government are making their effort to make a proper land use control through periodical community meeting.

Cultural Master Plan:

Bamiyan Cultural Master Plan was developed in consultation with UNESCO and implementing partners in 2007 and has been adopted as a policy by the local government in Bamiyan and the Ministries of Urban Development and Information and Culture at the national level. The Master Plan is functioning as a guide to urban development within the boundaries of the World heritage Property and the Valley in order to mitigate potentially negative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. The Master Plan is being monitored by different levels of government with qualified success, but needs to be simplified as much as be applicable for local Bamiyan authorities to

implement more effectively in the ground. The principles of plan are currently being incorporated into a new Urban Development Master Plan by the Ministry of Urban Development which is the official and legal document for development in the Bamiyan Valley into the future.

Site Guards:

Since 2005 the MoIC with the help of UNESCO Kabul Office is funding to hire 8 on-site guards in each of the properties within the serial nomination, these resources are currently deployed to control illegal or unauthorized access to the sites to do so in 2015, the MoIC has signed an agreement with UNESCO allocating sufficient found for the guards. However the Ministry of Interior has also deployed a team of police officers from the specialized unit (012) for the protection of cultural properties to monitor and safeguard the World Heritage properties within the Valley. These steps have effectively stopped illicit traffic and unauthorized access in the WH property and represent effective implementation of corrective measures on site security.

Education and Public Awareness:

UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture have organized regular stakeholder meetings in Bamiyan to raise-awareness amongst local government actors, private land holders and NGOs to help ensure the compliance with the building codes developed within the management plan and master plan for Bamiyan.

Western Buddha niche:

We have a great hope to address the problems of the rear of the Western Buddha niche which is in a critical situation and needs urgent attention avoiding further destruction. In 2013 the MoIC and ICOMOS began to construct the scaffolding in the niche which will give access to for conservation purposes. It is still is not completed. Also the constructing of container as temporary shelters for the fragments of the Western Buddha was completed during 2011, a port of the mentioned containers had been damaged during spring time of 2015 which re constructed by the help of UNUSCO Kabul office. The government of Afghanistan is currently waiting for the commencement of the phase v project for the safeguarding of Bamiyan World Heritage site, which will be funded by the government of Japan. Once the project begins, the consolidation work of the Western Buddha niche will start.

b) Progress towards the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Stabilizing the eastern Buddha niche brings the site closer to its removal from the List in Danger after de-mining project completed in the Sites. If a plan to stabilize the western Buddha carries out in 2015 and onwards, we have a great hope the immediate threat of collapse and to the integrity of this core part of this world heritage site will be removed.

Further conservation of mural paintings was undertaken by the MoIC, UNESCO and NRICPT in 2013 and training for conservation and archaeology for Afghan experts within the MoIC carried in out in Japan in previous years. These capacity-building efforts will help ensure the conservation of paintings in the longest-term as well as towards the goal of removing the list of in danger.

Other activities, including the provision of security guards within the property and further steps for the management plan and the new urban master plan are assisting with achieving the goal. Once the Western Buddha is stabilized and sites such as Gholghalah, Zohak and Kakrak are conserved, the condition for removal from Danger List should have been achieved.

Shari Gholgholah:

Consolidation of some parts of Shahr-i-Gholghola at the south side such as walls and domical chambers was implemented in 2015 with cooperation, Department of Conservation of Historical Monuments of MoIC, and honored experts from UNESCO.

Ministry of Information and Culture hopes for the continuation of the consolidation in the year 2015 onwards with support from the Government of Italy and UNESCO.

In 2013, with the project funded by the Government of Italy, UNESCO Kabul, ICOMOS Germany and the Ministry of Culture undertook 3d modeling of the site to better understand the topography. From this documentation and previous damage assessments carried out by UNESCO, Aachen University and the MoIC, a conservation treatment plan was developed to address the problems of erosion in the site and to carry out necessary conservation on some of the more important mud brick buildings that cover the site and which are collapsing year by year. The project will also increase safe access to the site by stabilizing the walking paths and provide some information points for the public to better understand the importance of the site. In 2015 the activities will also include some further

archaeological investigation to better understand the chronology of the site and further elaborate the OUV. If this project can continue from 2014 to 2016 to conserve many more buildings, it will hopefully meet the conditions to remove the site from immediate danger.

Kakrak and Shari Zohak:

The Italian funded project also carried out 3D modeling of Kakrak and Zohak to understand the situation of erosion and conservation needs at these sites. Plans are being developed to undertake conservation and protect the sites from erosion. It is mentioning that conservation work at the water channels and pathways at the Zohak city has been implemented by the funding of MoIC at the site in 2015.

c) Difficulties in implementing corrective measures

The corrective measures, involving site security, stabilization of the Western Buddha niche, conservation of the fragments, conservation and archaeology at Gholgholah and the development of a management plan place a lot of demands for human and financial resources on the Afghan Government and the Ministry of Information and Culture in particular. This presents difficulties in meeting the entire financial burden and requires continued support from the international community to address all the necessary measures adequately.

The Other 8 sites of WH:

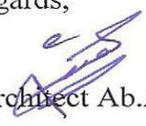
These sites listed within the nomination are all archaeologically and architecturally complex and are subject to the pressures of erosion through rain and heavy spring snowmelt. In some case this poses a threat to the integrity of the sites, where towers and buildings at Shari Zohak, Kakrak and Shari Gholgholah are in danger of collapse or serious and rapid deterioration. Thankfully, the urgent and emergency problems of Shari Gholgholah are currently being addressed with support from the Government of Italy and UNESCO Kabul Office. The government does not have the technical expertise and financial resources to deal with all these issues simultaneously and very much needs continued assistance from UNESCO and the international community to address these issues presently.

Many parts of the site within and outside the boundaries face increasing urban pressures from the re-settlement of people within the Valley. Some land within the boundaries of the Buddha Cliff, especially, is in private hands. Much of the vernacular architecture, traditional land use, canal and irrigation systems that make up the contemporary cultural landscape lie outside the present boundaries of the site and is under increasing pressure for development and urban growth. There is also the potential for mining in the nearby mountains of Bamiyan Province which will largely impact further on population size and urbanism in the Valley. Large scale development within the boundaries, adjacent or in nearby villages has the potential to negatively impact the OUV of the site. At the moment, this development is being curbed and controlled through the implementation of the Cultural Master plan, but it still remains as one of the greatest challenges to the conservation of the site in the long term.

Buddha Niches:

HE Minister for Information and Culture has requested UNESCO and other partners to assist the Government in at least partial reconstruction of one of the Buddha sculptures. More recently he has outlined this intention at the 11th and 12th Bamiyan Expert Working Groups. Several different proposals have been suggested for the Eastern Buddha, most notably the proposal by ICOMOS Germany, and the Government wishes to pursue one of these options when the stabilization measures in the lower gallery have been completed and when funding is available for this purpose.

Best Regards,


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