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Dr. Mechtild Rössler
Director World Heritage Center
Pplace de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP
France



Subject:- RESPONSE TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISION

Dear Dr. Mechtild

In accordance with Decision (40 COM 7B.11), I am pleased to submit a progress report to the World Heritage Center on the issues raised by the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the Lower Valley of the Omo world heritage property, in the indicative format, for examination of the Committee at its 41st session in 2017. The report is therefore enclosed to this letter.

Ethiopia wishes to reassure the World Heritage Committee that the State Party will continue to implement the World Heritage Convention (1972) to ensure the sustained preservation of the world heritage properties elsewhere.

Should you require any further information, I always remain at your disposal.

Cc:

> Office of the Minister

Office of the State Minister (Culture <u>Ministry of Culture and Tourism</u>

Permanent Delegation of Ethiopia <u>Paris</u>



Sincerely yours,

Yorlas Desta Director General



GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

STATE PARTY REPORT ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF LOWER VALLEY OF THE OMO (Ethiopia) PROPERTY (C17)

IN RESPONSE TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISION: 40 COM 7B.11

FOR SUMBISSION BY 1 FEBRUARY 2017

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- 2.1.1 Provision of full details of the Kuraz project,
- 2.1.2 Clarification of the boundaries and submission of proposals for a buffer zone,
- 2.1.3 Finalization and submission of an improved Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) based on the clarified boundary and the precise attributes of the OUV.
- 2.1.4 Provision of the details of the proposed relocation of pastoral communities;
- **2.2** Paragraph 9- Request for the implementation of the recommendations of the April 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission, particularly the following:
- **2.2.1** Consider adequate visitor and risk management components in the management plan for the intended paleo-tourism activities at the property,
- 2.2.2 Promote local community involvement in both site management and tourism,
- **2.2.3** Establish a soil erosion monitoring baseline to define control measures where erosion could pose a threat to fossil-bearing deposits,
- **2.2.4** Define protocols for back-filling and rehabilitation of open research excavation areas and include an obligation for consolidation of new open areas for all new archaeological research projects,
- **2.2.5** Establish a soil salinization monitoring baseline in areas of planned irrigation outside the property to monitor and address potential impacts on down gradient fossil-bearing deposits and outcrops;
- 2.3 Paragraph 10 Submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2014, a report on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in 2014.
- 3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party (ies)
- 4. Updates on any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone.
- 5. Public access to the state of conservation report
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Appendixes

- 4.1 ToR for the upcoming Heritage Impact Assessment mission
- 4.2 Project document for the Kuraz Sugar Development



Decision: 40 COM 7B.11

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add,

2. Recalling Decision 38 COM 7B.48, adopted at its 38th session (Doha, 2014),

3. Acknowledges the details provided by the State Party in its report on the recently signed three-year European Union-funded project entitled "Promoting the Contribution of World Heritage for Sustainable Development and Reinforcing Capacities for Protection and Conservation of Paleontological Sites in Ethiopia", which will consider boundaries, and conservation and management of the property;

4. <u>Notes</u> that documentation submitted by the State Party did not provide clear and precise information on the exact location of the Ethiopian Sugar Development Corporation Project (Kuraz project), even though this was requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in

2014:

5. <u>Appreciates</u>, however, that the State Party recently submitted a document to the World Heritage Centre with an official map showing the exact location of the Ethiopian Sugar Development Corporation Project (Kuraz project) vis-à-vis the Lower Valley of the Omo World Heritage property;

6. Welcomes the revision of the initial plan of sugarcane area from 175,000 ha to 100,000 by the State Party in order to mitigate possible impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the

property;

- 7. <u>Notes with concern</u> that work on infrastructure and agricultural projects associated with the Kuraz project, including sugar plantations, dams, roads and new villages, have already commenced without submitting adequate impact assessments, and without clarification of the property's boundaries;
- 8. Requests the State Party to ensure the following work has been undertaken and considered by the Committee:
 - 1. Provision of full details of the Kuraz project by 31 December 2016,
 - 2. Clarification of the boundaries and submission of proposals for a buffer zone,
 - 3. Finalization and submission of an improved Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) based on the clarified boundary and the precise attributes of the OUV,
 - 4. Provision of the details of the proposed relocation of pastoral communities;
- 9. <u>Takes note</u> of the results of the April 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission and <u>urges</u> the State Party to implement its recommendations, particularly the following:
 - Protect the scientific value and potential of the property, as envisaged at the time of
 inscription, by clearly defining areas of archaeological potential and defining strategies for
 its management as a visually coherent landscape with no development between visible
 outcrops,
 - 2. Consider adequate visitor and risk management components in the management plan for the intended paleo-tourism activities at the property,
 - 3. Promote local community involvement in both site management and tourism,

4. Establish a soil erosion monitoring baseline to define control measures where erosion could pose a threat to fossil-bearing deposits,

5. Define protocols for back-filling and rehabilitation of open research excavation areas and include an obligation for consolidation of new open areas for all new archaeological research projects,

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- 6. Establish a soil salinization monitoring baseline in areas of planned irrigation outside the property to monitor and address potential impacts on down gradient fossil-bearing deposits and outcrops;
- 10. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2017**, a report on the state of conservation of the property, and on the steps taken to implement the above-mentioned recommendations, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017.



1. Executive Summery

In response to the World Heritage Committee Decision (**40 COM 7B.11**) at its fortieth session in Istanbul, Turkey from 10–20 July 2016, the State Party of Ethiopia generates this progress report on the State of Conservation of the Lower Omo Valley World Heritage Site.

The report consists of a comprehensive response to the world Heritage Committee by providing detailed information on the issues related to the Lower Omo Valley WHS, which includes the detailed document of the Kuraz Sugar Development Project, initiated by the government of Ethiopia in the Southern Omo.

The report also shows the status of activities the European Union project, which includes the establishment of a site management plan and boundary delineation of the property as well as tourism development and community engagement initiatives.

This report further highlights the reactions of the State Party towards the recommendations of the joint UNESCO/ICOMOS high level Reactive Monitoring Mission to the Lower Omo Valley world heritage property.

As a follow up to the decision of the World Heritage Committee, the State Party of Ethiopia has been committed and will continue to implement the World Heritage Convention. This report will be available for examination by the Committee at its 41th session in 2017.



2. Responses of the State Party

This document provides the progress report requested by the World Heritage Committee in the **Decision** (40 COM 7B.11) and related issues regarding the management of the Lower Valley of the Omo, World Heritage Site, potential threats to the property and issues related to the Kuraz Project under going in the area. The report is made available for examination by the Committee at its 41st session in 2017

2.1 Paragraph 8- Requests to the State Party to ensure the following work has been undertaken:

8.1 Provision of full details of the Kuraz project,

The State Party would like to recall the submission of the document for the Kuraz Development Project on 02 June 2016 to the Chief of African Unite of the World Heritage Center. As it is mentioned in the project document, the Kuraz Sugar Development project is located between 508'14"- 6017'3"N and 35043'44"- 36013'39"E with an average altitudinal range of 373 to 477 meters above sea level.

Lower Omo of the South Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) was identified as potential areas suitable for sugarcane development. The areas were identified in Selamago and Nyangatom Woredas of South Omo, in Maji and Meinitshasha Woredas of Bench-Maji and in Decha Woreda of Kefa Zone. The project *Command Areas* are distributed in three zones. The project command areas lie in Selamago, Nyangatom, Decha, Menit Shasha and Maji Woredas.

Selamago Woreda is on the left side of the Omo River course where the weir site is situated. It is accessible by a dry weathered road from Jinka, the capital of South Omo Zone. Other Woredas of the project command areas; Nyangatom, Decha, Menit Shasha and Maji Woredas are found on the right side of Omo River. Accessible to each Woreda capitals through Jima-Mizan-Jemu-Tum-Kibish and Kangaten. For further information please consult the project document is attached to this report (Appendix-2)

8.2 Clarification of the boundaries and submission of proposals for a buffer zone,

In response to the recommendations of the Joint UNESCO-ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission (13-19 April 2015) and the World Heritage Committee Decision 38 COM 7B.48 at its 38th session in Doha (June 2014), the State Party of Ethiopia in collaboration to the European Union Development Fund initiated a project to develop the Lower Omo Valley world heritage property.

Accordingly, the first phase of the project on baseline survey has been undergoing by engaging two local consultants in 2016. The baseline survey is being carried out on site protection, community engagement as well as tourism development aspects. Under site protection component, boundary delineation, legal framework and establishing a site management plan have also been considered.

8.3 Finalization and submission of an improved Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) based on the clarified boundary and the precise attributes of the OUV,

In response to the world heritage committee request for the improvement of the previous Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), the State Party engaged a team of experts from the Sugar Corporation and Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage and the regional Culture and Tourism Bureau to revise the HIA. Consequently to revise the original HIA, a specific Terms of Reference (Appendes-2) has been designed, which is attached to this report for consideration by the world heritage committee.

As far as the EIA of the Kuraz Project is concerned, the state party has determined to revise the previous EIA of the Sugar Development Project following the revision of the initial plan for the sugarcane area from 175,000 ha to 100,000 to mitigate possible impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. As a result the process of engaging specialized consultants to work on the revision the EIA is currently under progress.

2.2 Paragraph 9- Request for the implementation of the recommendations of the April 2015 Reactive Monitoring mission, particularly the following:

2.2.1 Protect the scientific value and potential of the property by clearly outlining areas of archaeological potential and defining strategies for its management as a visually coherent landscape with no development between visible outcrops,

The final and comprehensive report of the High Level UNESCO/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission (13-19 April 2015) has been submitted to the Government of Ethiopia in June 2015. The comprehensive report includes important recommendations on the overall state of conservation of the Lower Omo Valley world heritage property, which will assist the State Party to maintain and enhance the Outstanding Universal



Value of the property. The report further puts forward recommendations on the soil salinity treatment and management of soil erosions instigated from the planned irrigations related to the Kuraz project initiatives. As a result, the Government of Ethiopia took note of the comprehensive UNESCO/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring recommendations and initiated the EU Project so that the concerns and suggestions of the mission will be addressed. The revision of the original EIA of the Kuraz project is being carried out address some of the concerns mentioned in the World Committee's decision.

2.2.2 Consider adequate visitor and risk management components in the management plan for the intended paleo-tourism activities at the property,

In the framework of the European Union (EU) funded project on "Promoting capacities for the Protection and Conservation of Paleontological Sites in Ethiopia" some components of the project are under implementation as of January 2017. As part of the project implementation, multi-disciplinary consultants have been engaged to undertake a baseline survey on local community engagement and support, conservation and preservation of the property and tourism development. Accordingly the site management plan as part of the site conservation and preservation scheme is planned to deal with the visitor and risk management components.

2.2.3 Promote local community involvement in both site management and tourism,

In response to the World Heritage Committee decision, one of the three major components of the EU project is promoting local community engagement through capacity building and small scale business initiatives.

2.2.4 Establish a soil erosion monitoring baseline to define control measures where erosion could pose a threat to fossil-bearing deposits,

As part of the EIA of the project being revised currently, the soil erosion threats will be carefully measured and then a mitigation strategy will be established.

2.2.5 Define protocols for back-filling and rehabilitation of open research excavation areas,

The Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage has established a Research Protocol that works for more than forty research projects functioning in Ethiopia. This protocol has established

of Cultural He

procedures to guide activities in open research excavations that include back filling and rehabilitation of the research area.

2.2.6 Establish a soil salinization monitoring baseline in areas of planned irrigation;

In the framework of the proposed initiatives to revise the original EIA of the Kuraz project, the extent of soil salinations, resulted from the planned irrigation outside of the property, will be amended accordingly to the downsizement of the project span and a mitigation strategy is accordingly designed to avoid potential impact of fossil bearing deposits and outcrops in the property.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party (ies)

No other conservation issue is identified in the property.

4. Updates on any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone.

No potential major restorations and alterations or new constructions intended within the property and the buffer zone.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

The State Party is willing to make this Statement of Conservation Report open for public access.

6. SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF STATE PARTY

Full name Director General

Title

Date

7. Appendixes:-

7.1 Appendix 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN THE VALLEY OF THE OMO WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

1. Introduction

These terms of reference outline the purpose and processes to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) on the Lower Omo Valley World Heritage Site. The guidelines provide the rationales for such assessments, the methodology to be used to conduct the HIA, and suggest activities and deliverables to be included in the HIA report. The Heritage Impact Assessment process is composed of two principal components: assessment of the values of the heritage and assess impacts that might arise from the development initiatives of the Kuraz Sugar Development Project (KSDP) in the Lower Omo Valley.

1.1 The purpose of the HIA

This Heritage Impact Assessment is initiated in response to development initiatives, which could potentially affect the world heritage property. The purpose of this assessment is to identify all heritage resources that might be affected by the undergoing development initiatives of the Kuraz Sugar Development Project and to submit appropriate recommendations that might be required to assist the developers in managing the discovered heritage resources in a responsible manner in compliance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention.

1.2 Rationales

The rationales for the requirements to undertake this HIA arises from the decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee inter alia (40 COM 7B.11). The Committee has requested the State Party of Ethiopia for the "Finalization and submission of an improved Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) ... based on the precise attributes of the OUV" of the property.

The World Heritage Centre has further underlined the request in a letter addressed to the Permanent Delegation of Ethiopia to UNESCO on 29 July 2016 by demanding for an improved Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for

examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41^{st} session in 2017 (Decision 40 COM 7B.11)..

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This Heritage Impact Assessment will be undertaken in relation to the Lower Omo Valley World Heritage Site and the Kuraz Sugar Development Project. The HIA comprises fieldwork and literature review to identify cultural heritage resources that could potentially be impacted by the undergoing project initiatives.

2. METHODOLOGY

The process of the heritage impact assessment includes the following steps:

- 1. Understand the heritage resources in the study area
- 2. Assessment of heritage values and significance
- 3. Identify potential Impacts and evaluate the result
- 4. Recommend mitigation measures
- 5. Produce professional report

2.1 Site survey

Undertake a fieldwork in the study area, on foot and using a vehicle, guided by international and local standards to identify heritage resources that could potentially be affected by the undergoing project initiatives to recommend mitigation measures.

2.2 Desktop study

Conduct desktop study to identify the available information on the subject in question and provide a background setting for the Heritage Impact Assessment that can be expected to occur in the area.



3. Activities and deliverables

Activities	Deliverables
Understanding the Historic Place	 Undertake literature review and research the historic development of the site and values of the property along with legal frameworks applicable to the context of the site.
1.1 Desk study and mapping survey	 Conduct literature review to collect the available information on the area and provide a background setting of the attributes that are expected to occur in the property. Investigate and extract relevant records of the archaeological sites embedded in the area. Evaluate the implications of the existing legal provisions to the subject in question Google earth and mapping survey to locate possible places where sites of heritage significance might be situated
1.2 Conduct a field survey by means of vehicle and on foot	 Locate, identify, record, photograph and describe sites of archaeological interest in the proposed project area; Record GPS points of significant areas; Undertake extensive survey to identify heritage resources affected by the proposed infrastructure development attached to the project and recommend mitigation measures.
 Assessment of heritage resource value and significance 	 Define the levels of significance of the heritage resources identified in the project area Create a Statement of Significance for the site; Analyze the values of the heritage resources and assign their significances based on the assessment of their historic and scientific values as appropriate.
3. List out impacts associated with the undergoing development initiatives and Identify the level of Impacts	 Identify impacts associated with proposed development initiatives and assess the level of impacts of each activities on heritage values; Evaluate the negative and positive impacts of the development initiatives on the heritage resources; Make recommendations on the appropriate management of these impacts.



4.	Recommend mitigation measures		List out mitigation measures to address each of the identified impacts based on the ICOMOS guideline on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural Heritage properties and consider alternatives; Ensure that all the discovered heritage resources are managed in a responsible manner; Ensure that all studies and results fulfil the requirements established in the national and international legal frameworks;
5.	Reporting	•	Generate valuable reports on the identified and anticipated impacts of the undergoing project activities and the level of influences the project has on the identified heritage resources from all stages of the project (construction, operation and discharging phases). Outline restrictions and limitation of the HIA process



7.2 Appendix-2: DESCRIPTION OF THE KURAZ SUGAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Project Background

Kuraz Sugar Development Project is aimed at establishing an Integrated development by establishing 3 sugar factories with daily cane crushing capacity of 12,000 ton on cane per day (TCD) having an annual production capacity of 150,000 tons so sugar with ethane and co-generation facilities and 1 sugar factory with daily cane crushing capacity of 24,000 ton of cane Perry day (TCD), having an annual production capacity of more than 300,000 tons of sugar with ethanol and Co-generation facilities. The project will devlop about 100,000 hectares of land of sugarcane plantations and establish a total of 4 sugar factories to address the existing sugar demand-supply gap in the country.

The project site can be reached by the 905 Km from Addis Ababa-Arba Minch-Jinka-Hana Village which is the nearest settlement center. Geographically, the entire project area is located 5°8′18″-6°¹16′59″ N latitude and 35°43′37″ -36°13′54″ E Longitude i.e between UTM 568 698m-695 365 m N and 137.256m-193 226mE.The Project site can be reached by the 905 km from Addis Aaba-Arba Minch-Jinka Hana village which is the nearest settlement center. Geographically, the entire project area is located 5°8′18″ – 6°16′59″ N latitude and 35°43′37″ – 36°13′54″E longitude i.e between UTM. 568 98m – 695 365 m N and 137. 256m -193 226 m E.

The left bank development area is composed of 15,000 ha gravity and 23,000 ha pump irrigation schemes. Only the gravity scheme is currently under construction which is partially planted with cane and partially covered with maize for the pastoralist community of the surrounding area.

This command area is found in left bank of Omo River at north cast part of the Kuraz Sugar Development Project. It is specifically located between 5°50′00" -6°16′56" N Latitude and 160 673 m-180 000 m E longitude. The nearest town is Hana located on the left side of Omo River about 120 km southwest of Jinka town.

The topography at left gravity scheme command area of Kuraz sugar development project is considered as plain with an elevation ranging from 476 m above sea level at the head of left bank main canal to 430 m above sea level at tail end of the irrigation command area. The slope is flat with a slope of less than 2 per cent in most places.

Regarding to Kuraz Sugar Development project in the Right Side command area, only Block 1 which is specifically situated at north western part of the project covering the Right bank areas of the Omo River is planned to be developed in the coming few years. Geographically, the project area is located between 150 223 and 167 443 UTm East and between 655 166 and 679 135 UTM North. It has an estimated distance of about 918 km far away from Addis Ababa and 700 km far away from Hawassa town, the capital of the SNNPRS. According to land evaluation report, the gross area of land in Block 1. Right Side of Kuraz Sugar Development project is 46,000 ha.

Based on the current soil evaluation only 32.000 ha potentially suitable area of has been identified in the project area. But out of the land suitable for cane plantation, only 22,000 ha is planned to be developed with sugarcane in Block. 1. Some area will be used for developing maize for pastoralists in the loc areas. Some put of the block bordering the Omo National Park is reserved for wild life. So far, no sugarcane development activities are undertaken in this Block.

The other area planned for future sugar development is in Block II of Right bank area with total net area of not more than 40,000 ha to be planted with sugarcane. This Block is found immediately downstream of Omo national park. The area to be used for sugarcane plantation in this Block will be delineated afar sill suitability and other relevant studies are finalized. Currently no construction activities are undertaken in this block.



Main Features of the Project

Item	Data
Project commentced	2010
Planned Construction period	15 years
Total proposed Sugrcane area	About 100, 000 ha
Head work type	Diversion Weir
Main canals	Two main canals
Left main canal	53 km (Under construction)
Right main canal	145 km (Not started)
Secondary and tertiary canals	550 km (approx)
Drainage canals	300 km (approx.)
Access roads	More than 300 km
Land for camp & factories	300 ha
Cane planting started	2011
Cane planted area till May 2016	10,000 ha
Proposed housing and facilities	4 towns and 40 villages
Housing & facilities till May 201	1 town and 4 villages
Associated services and infrastructures	Schools, hospitals, etc

The project Area Distribution

The sugar development project is located in South Nations Nationalities and peoples, Regional State (SNNPRS) Lower Omo Valley area in Selamago and Nyangatom Woredas of South Omo. In Maji and Meinit Shasha Woredas of Bench-Maji and in Decha Woreda of Kefa Zone. The Project Command Areas are distributed in these tree zones.

The distribution of the command areas delineated for the Suaar Development project is as follows: about 78% is in South Omo Zone. 21% is in Bench Maji Zone and 1% in Kdfa Zone. The project command aras distribution by woreda is 42% delineated in Nyangatom and 36% in Selmago Woreda of South Omo Zone: 21% is in Meinit Shasha Wereda of Bench Maji Zone. The rest one and of the command area is in Decba

Wereda of Kefa Zone.

Project Location and Accessibility

The project command areas lie in Selamago. NYangatom, Decha, Meinit Shasha and Maji woredas. Selamgo Woreda is no the left side of Omo River course where the diversion weir site is situated. It is accessible by a dry weathered road form jinka. The capital of South Omo Zone.

Other Woredas of the project command areas; Nyangatom. Decha, Meinit Shaha and jaji woredas, are found on the right side of Omo River. They are accessible to each Woreda capitals through Jima-Mizan-jemu-tum-Kibish and kangaten. Except the road from Surna-Kibish to Nyangatom-Kibish all the project commands areas of Nyangatom Woreda are accessible during dry season.

Access roads and Bridges

To properly implement construction and operation work of the proposed project roads and bridges are essential. The following infrastructures will be constructed in the future:

- Roads for sugar transportation from the factories
- Service roads along Right and Left Main Canals,
- Service roads along Secondary canals
- Access roads to community Villages
- A number of brides and culverts will be constructed as construction of the scheme will necessitate construction of new road bridges and roads.

Sugar Factories

Four tractor building will be constructed with associated structures injuring offices, residential houses and other social services acquiring an area of about 300 hectare. The overall needed associated feathers, facilities and services such as electricity, water supply, social services and sewerage systems will be provided for the residents and employees of the sugar factories.

