

Name of World Heritage property	State Party	ID number
<b><i>Historic town of Zabid</i></b>	<b><i>Republic of Yemen</i></b>	<b>C 611</b>

STATE PARTY'S REPORT ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE  
HISTORIC TOWN OF ZABID– INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST IN  
DANGER

Ministry of Culture - GOPHCY– March 2017

**DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE AT ITS AT ITS  
40TH SESSION (Istanbul, 2016) CONCERNING THE HISTORIC TOWN OF ZABID**

Decision: 40 COM 7A.23

The World Heritage Committee,

1. **Having examined** Document WHC/16/40.COM/7A.Add,
2. **Recalling** Decisions 38 **COM 7A.13**, adopted at its 38th session (Doha, 2014) and 39 COM 7A.37 adopted at its 39th Session (Bonn, **2015**),
3. **Expresses its concern** at the recent damage caused to the cultural heritage of Yemen as a result of escalating armed conflict, and that the Historic City of Zabid continues to be subject to significant threats from the ongoing lack of organizational support and material resources for physical conservation projects;
4. **Acknowledges** the efforts of the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen (GOPHCY), other national entities, the local authorities, and the community of Zabid to protect and conserve the property despite the very difficult conditions in the city;
5. **Notes with regret** that, owing to the security situation in Yemen, it has not been possible to progress with the draft 'National Strategy for the Preservation of the Historic Cities, Sites and Monuments **2016 - 2020**' nor to prepare a complementary Action Plan and requests the State Party to ensure that the Action Plan, when prepared, should address the current situation and include provisions for conservation of damaged buildings, local community awareness, and should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies;
6. **Welcomes** the continuing support of the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) for Yemeni cultural heritage;
7. **Calls on** the international community to provide financial support for the implementation of the Emergency Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Yemen's cultural heritage, adopted at the UNESCO Expert meeting in July 2015;
8. **Also requests** the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, once the security situation has improved, to assess current conditions at the property, to consider progress with the corrective measures and to

advise on the proposed Action Plan;

9. Reiterates its request to the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre with details of the buffer zone and other technical requirements as requested and to submit a minor boundary modification proposal by **1 February 2017**, for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017;
10. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2017, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017;
11. Decides to retain Historic Town of Zabid (Yemen) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

## 1. Executive summary of the report

Yemen is facing several challenges and threats, mainly by armed conflict , airstrikes and siege invaded by coalition forces, that lead to deteriorating of security , socioeconomic situation and lack of resources, because of that the state party have not been able to provide even the basic needs of inhabitation, the old town of Zabid, as all historical cities in the country has been suffering of that circumstances, conservation programs and measures almost terminated.

Despite the very difficult situation experiences by the country, state party has applying several measures to stabilize the state of conservation for Zabid property, like ;

Paving of some small areas, urgent intervention in Alashaair mosque, funded by SFD supervised by SFD and GOPHCY.

An awareness rising program, to improve the environmental status and heritage protection, involving the local community in the process, funded by WHC. SFD and GOPHCY have developed the work plan, the activities implementation will follow soon . Thanks to UNESCO Doha office for its efforts and follow-up.

There are small projects of rehabilitation the old souqe area in Zabid ,thanks to German Development Fund for support.

The public works fund is going to fund a small paving project in the old souqe area immediately after finalizing the preparation procedures and bidding .

**The state party** appeals, WHC and all other concerned international organization to play their vital role and commitments, to prevent WH sites in Yemen from Arabic coalitions forces according to the international law, as well as to speed up their obligations, to provide financial supports for implementation of emergency actions required.

In this period GOPHCY has have a trained core expert team , contains of architects , engineers, archeologists , skilled technicians, this team could carry out the necessary studies and documentation as well any emergency and first aid activities of the damaged heritage sites in Yemen, if it gets financial supports and assistance .

The state party like to acknowledge ICCROM Sharjah and UNESCO Doha for their modest assistance and supports. State party urge more supports from them and from other international concerned organizations, as the Yemeni world heritage sites are in danger. The state party relying to the WHC support, asking to take its responsibility towards vital protection of Yemeni world heritage sites, as they are encountered of serious destruction and irreversible deterioration.

Our thanks and appreciation to the Director General of UNESCO for their support and solidarity ,as well to all international experts and WH and the committee and advisory bodies.

Special thanks and appreciation to the German government for permanent support to Yemen in heritage protection, and its willingness to continue this support .

## **2. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision, paragraph by paragraph**

2.1 Current instable status in the country due to escalating war and armed conflict, which are the main reasons of resources lacking , that also have prevented any development projects in the country. Therefore the historic city of Zabid continues to be subject to significant threats from the ongoing lack of organizational support and material resources for physical conservation projects.

2.2 Despite the very difficult conditions in the country, ministry of culture - GOPHCY trying by any available means, according to its obligation to carry out some measures to protect and conserve the property, like;

- Paving the southern gate area of old city, funded by SFD implementing now.
- Improvement of the old shops facades, removing any distortions, and renovating of Zabid old market passage roofs, funded by German Development Fund first phase, implementing now.
- Preparation of technical study of Improvement of the old shops facades, removing any distortions, and renovating of Zabid old market passage roofs, for second phase, funded by German Development Fund.
- With cooperation of local authority and court in Zabid , two building violations have been removed.

- Follow-up and inspecting the building activities in the old city of Zabid and take the proper decisions against the violators according to the law and administrative procedures.
- Curing out some restoration works in Alashaair mosque, funded and supervised by SFD.
- Awareness rising program, to improve the environmental status and old city protection, involving local community funded by WHC, via SFD and GOPHCY, work plan has been developed by GOPHCY and SFD. Thanks to UNESCO Doha office for its efforts and follow-up.

2.3 The state party still waiting for the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies advises on the proposed Action Plan of the National Strategy, since we have provided them with the draft of the Strategy including action plan. In the meantime, Yemen has facing crises situation, lack of resources and critical socioeconomic status, we are not able to revise and update the draft national strategy, but surely when the situation improved we would do address the current situation include provisions for conservation of damaged buildings, local community awareness, building capacity...etc., then we will need your assistance. We appreciate if you could include this in your plan to speed up the process.

2.4 Unfortunately, because of the war and escalated armed conflict, as well as the siege and locked Sana'a international airport, the support of the German Agency for international Cooperation (GIZ) and the support of the World Heritage Category 2 Center (ARC-WH) in Bahrain have been terminated.

2.5 The old town of Zabid still facing certain threats, from the coalition force airstrikes, that recently the agriculture research center, which situated about one Km from the old city of Zabid, has been destroyed, using heavy bombs by coalition air force, generated intensive quaking, minor damages have been notes in several nearby Zabid historical buildings.

2.6 In this current conflict situation, **the state party** appeals the WHC and all other concerned international organization to play their vital role and commitments, to prevent WH sites in Yemen from Arabic coalitions forces according to the international law, as well as to speed up their obligations, to provide financial supports for implementation of all emergency actions required, for safeguarding the Yemeni culture heritage sites, as they are in the WH list endanger (they are in real danger). Therefore, we are in urgent need of assistance in preparing financial proposals for international support.

2.7 Since this moment the state party, offers a certain open invitation to Joint World Heritage Center/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to visit Yemen to evaluate state of conservation of the property, assist the damages and identify measures needed to ensure further protection and conservation of the property, as soon as they wish.

2.8 We consider, it is urgently important, to get a possible consultation and support from the World Heritage Center and Advisory Bodies, to develop a

set of emergency and corrective measures with a timeframe for implementation.

2.9 The state party have provided the World Heritage Center details of proposed boundaries of the old town of Zabid in 2013 via the UNESCO national committee. Which was defined based on Zabid conservation plan approved by central authority in the same year.

### **3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party**

- Collation forces airstrikes
- Armed conflict escalation
- Lack of resources
- Socioeconomic situation deterioration
- Natural factors and decay

### **4. In conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, please describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area (core zone and buffer zone and/or corridors) that might be envisaged.**

N/A

### **5. Public access to the state of conservation report**

State Party ,doesn't mind to upload the report for public access.

**Signature Of The Authority**