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To: n.al-hassan@unesco.org

a.paolini@unesco.org

**From :** Dr. Abdulqader M. Alkharraz  
Chairman, Environment Protection Authority  
Tel: +967 777479801  
Email : [k-ecc@hotmail.com](mailto:k-ecc@hotmail.com)

Subject: Responding to the inquiries of the Heritage Committee on  
Socotra Island.

With reference to the above subject, As there is no much change since the previous report, the state party would like to adopt the previous report while responding to the World Heritage Committee Decision: 41 COM 7B.23 in this letter.

And attached a report about your inquiry on the situation in Socotra Island

We look forward to continued cooperation and work better with you.

We also expect you to set a date to meet you either in Qatar or outside Yemen to discuss priorities and ways of support to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the island of Socotra

Best regards.

**Dr. Abdul qader M. Alkharraz**

Chairman,  
Environment Protection Authority





**As there is no much change since the previous report, the state party would like to adopt the previous report while responding to the World Heritage Committee Decision: 41 COM 7B.23 in this letter.**

**Below are the points raised in the latest decision of the committee that requires answers from the state detailed. Beneath each point a detailed answer is stated.**

3. Reiterates its significant concern that the vulnerability of the property to pressures from unsustainable resource use, soil erosion and habitat degradation is likely to have increased following the impacts of the cyclones, and recalls its request to the State Party to ensure that the road network in the property is not expanded;

**The ongoing pavement that has been reported in social media is for paving the already existing roads of the two main towns of Socotra; 10 KM inside Hadiboh and 5 KM inside Qalansia. The main tasks now for the government with regards roads are to rehabilitate the already existing roads that were affected by the cyclones of 2015 (Chapala and Meg). However, this is limited to availability of fund.**

**There was an individual attempt from some villages located in the Middle Eastern part of Socotra to open unpaved road to their areas by applying for donations from some well-off relatives living in the Arabian Gulf countries. They managed to get fund and commenced a limited unpaved road.**

**This attempt was authorized by the authorities in order to mitigate burdens suffered by these villages. However, it is restricted to essential needs for the aim of mitigating environmental and OUVs impacts while enhancing communities' development.**

**Another important point we would like to raise in this section (with regards to soil erosion), is that experts from Mendel University-Czech Republic as part of the ongoing UNEP project has started their mission on Socotra since 16.01.2018. They are working on the Sustainable Land Management. They plan to introduce best practices from their work elsewhere to Socotra. At the moment they are exploring reasons for soil erosions where exist followed by selecting lands for sustainable management with the aim of adopting these practices on Socotra as a whole.**

4. Calls on all UNESCO Member States to support emergency safeguarding measures, including through the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;





**The state party has applied for fund and secured it. As international transfer cannot be wired to the state party due to the ongoing situation in Yemen, the state party has officially mandated the ARC-WHC to co-implement the project.**

5. Recalls the State Party's commitment expressed in 2016 that the rehabilitation of the sea port, which was damaged by the cyclones, would be limited to restoring it to its previous condition, and would not include any extensions;

**The rehabilitation is limited to restoring the seaport to its previous condition with limited extension in area that is covered by the previous EIA (EIA used when this port was first built). In addition, local assessment has been conducted by EPA Socotra experts to ensure that OUVs are not impacted. The rehabilitation was implemented in the period when air blockade in Yemen are in place. Hence, we cannot invite national or international expertise to conduct the required EIA.**

6. Requests the State Party and to provide further information on the development projects on Socotra to the World Heritage Centre and on alleged military operations, for review by IUCN, prior to taking any decisions regarding their implementation that would be difficult to reverse, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

**There is no military operation on Socotra. The Arabian coalition has developed capacities of some institutions on Socotra including police and army. They employed hundreds of Socotrans within these institutions. This is beneficial to local development as well as to the environment as it has reduced pressures on marine and terrestrial environment. For instance, there is no doubt that the number of fishermen on Socotra has been reduced and people are moving towards working in public and private sectors offered by the UAE support to Socotra.**

**Development projects are addressed below.**

7. Also requests the State Party to ensure that any development on Socotra, including humanitarian aid-related development, is subject to a rigorous assessment of impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, in line with IUCN's World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment, and to submit a copy of the completed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to the World Heritage Centre, for review by IUCN;

**In the main time and due to current condition which will not allow us to invite international experts to conduct any required assessment, the government and local authority cannot refuse donated development that lead to community development and livelihoods improvements particularly during this critical period. In addition, Socotra environment is our capital and treasure that we must protect and conserve. Hence,**





***we do our best to ensure that these developments take place far from Socotra's OUVs and in the worst case with very limited impacts on the OUVs. This is to be measured by our local experts as this is the only available option for us at the moment.***

***All developments that took place so far are rehabilitations of schools, health units...etc, except Zayad city (80 houses) in an open area in the south where no OUVs are identified and a small extension for the seaport that we have clarified earlier.***

***We have already sent official invitation to the committee to visit Socotra. They can come back with detailed reports on this.***

***8. Reiterates its request to the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess its state of conservation, including in view of the impacts from the cyclones, and to support the State Party in identifying priorities for rehabilitation and management activities;***

***Already sent the invitation and we look forward to welcome them soon.***

