



STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT

Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property (C1227)

Republic of Mauritius

Ministry of Arts and Culture
Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund
January 2019





STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS BY THE STATES PARTIES

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*)

Name of World Heritage property (State(s) Party(ies)) (Identification number)

Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property, Mauritius (C1227)

1. Executive Summary of the report

In line with the paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the State Party of the Republic of Mauritius informed the World Heritage Centre of its intention to undertake and/or authorize four development projects in the Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property as follows:

1. Port Louis Waterfront Phase 2, Cultural Heritage District, by Landscape Mauritius Ltd;
2. Immigration Square Urban Terminal by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport;
3. The Light Rail project by Metro Express Ltd and an end station at Immigration Square;
4. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum by the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

The State Party invited an Advisory Mission to Mauritius to assess and advise thereon from 14 to 18 May 2018. The Advisory Mission submitted its report and made the following main recommendation:

“The mission recommends that an overarching vision and masterplan on precinct level be developed, integrating all these development projects. This vision and masterplan should then be assessed for its impacts following the PPG 6 prescribed protocols. This masterplan should be completed and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for technical Review by the Advisory Bodies before design and implementation of any of the projects commence.”

Following the submission of the report of the Advisory Mission, the Government of Mauritius has initiated the preparation of a Master Plan for the buffer zone and its extended areas in August 2018 with the setting up of a committee chaired by Hon. N. Bodha, Minister of Public Infrastructure and Public Transport including Hon. P. Roopun, Minister of Arts and Culture and Mr Laurent, Lord Mayor of Port Louis. A technical team was also set up to work on the preparation of the Master Plan to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for Technical Review.

The State of Conservation Report also provides an update on the four development projects mentioned hereabove.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

In 2014, the World Heritage Committee issued the latest decision regarding the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property¹ as follows:

“The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-4/38.COM/7B.Add,
2. Takes note with satisfaction of the measures taken by the States Parties concerned to address its previous requests to mitigate the threats on the Outstanding Universal Value of the following World Heritage properties:
[...]
- Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius);
[...]
3. Encourages the States Parties concerned to pursue their efforts to ensure the conservation of World Heritage properties;
4. Reminds the States Parties concerned to inform the World Heritage Centre in due course about any major development project that may negatively impact the Outstanding Universal Value of a property, before any irreversible decisions are made, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.”

In view of the decision, the measures were maintained at World Heritage Property. Meanwhile, the Government of Mauritius has initiated a number of development projects planned in the city centre of Port Louis where the World Heritage Property is located. A report thereon is available in section 4 of the present State of Conservation Report.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property’s Outstanding Universal Value

The World Heritage Property is currently not affected by other conservation issues. As noted by the Advisory Mission to Mauritius in May 2018:

“The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage property is very well maintained and curated. The state of conservation of the physical attributes within the boundaries of the property is in very good order and the interpretational signage located at the property is adequate. [...] The Mission congratulates the State Party and the AGTF on the high standard of the interpretation centre and the state of conservation of the attributes that contribute to the OUV of the Aapravasi Ghat located within the property, as well as its excellent research and community engagement activities.”

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

Background

In line with the paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the State Party of the Republic of Mauritius informed the World Heritage Centre of its intention to undertake and/or authorize development projects in the Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property as follows:

¹ 2014 Decisions WHC – 14/38. COM/16; Decision 38 COM 7B.98; 38th session held in Doha, Qatar from 15 to 25 June 2014.

- Port Louis Waterfront Phase 2, Cultural Heritage District, by Landscape Mauritius Ltd;
- Immigration Square Urban Terminal by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport;
- The Light Rail project by Metro Express Ltd and an end station at Immigration Square;
- The Intercontinental Slavery Museum by the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

Development in the buffer zone is currently dealt with at the level of the City Council of Port Louis. However, the large-scale projects mentioned here above are steered by different authorities namely:

- Landscape Mauritius Ltd is a private company whose main shareholder is the Government of Mauritius. The company was incorporated in 2016 *“further to the amalgamation of five companies engaged mainly in property development and management”*².
- The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport;
- The Metro Express Limited (MEL) is a *“Mauritian company incorporated on 26 October 2016 as a Public Company Limited by shares and is fully owned by Government. The Company is responsible to develop, finance, construct, operate and manage the light rail system in Mauritius”*³;
- The Ministry of Arts and Culture.

Considering these four large-scale projects, the State Party invited an Advisory Mission to Mauritius to assess and advise thereon from 14 to 18 May 2018. The Advisory Mission submitted its report and made the following recommendations:

- “The mission recommends that an overarching vision and masterplan on precinct level be developed, integrating all these development projects. This vision and masterplan should then be assessed for its impacts following the PPG 6 prescribed protocols. This masterplan should be completed and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for technical Review by the Advisory Bodies before design and implementation of any of the projects commence.”
- “There is an urgent need for stakeholder participation in planning through a well-defined and mandatory process, as at the moment that seems to be lacking, a fact that creates misunderstandings and lack of unanimity on the projects.”
- “Before any of the developments continue, an integrated vision and master plan for the buffer zone areas affected by the proposed redevelopments needs to be drafted. The Ministry of Housing as custodian of the urban quality of the buffer zone should steer and take ownership of this process and plan.”

² Information retrieved from the website of Landscape Mauritius Ltd: <http://landscopemauritius.com/about-us/>

³ Extract from the website of the Metro Express Limited company: <https://www.mauritiusmetroexpress.mu/about/>

The preparation of a Master Plan for the Buffer Zone and its extended area

Following the submission of the report of the Advisory Mission, the Government of Mauritius has initiated the preparation of a Master Plan for the buffer zone and its extended areas in August 2018.

The Hon N. Bodha, Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is chairing a committee set up to monitor the preparation of the Master Plan spearheaded by the Ministry of Housing and Lands. The first meeting of the committee was held on 29 August 2018 in the presence of Hon P. Roopun, Minister of Arts and Culture and Mr D. Laurent, Lord Mayor of Port Louis.

In November 2018, the monitoring committee set up a Technical Team composed of representatives of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the City Council of Port Louis, the Ministry of Arts and Culture, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, Mauritius Ports Authority and Port Louis Development Initiative together with landscape architects/planners/surveyors to draft an integrated Master Plan.

On completion, the integrated Master Plan will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for technical review as part of the recommendation of the Advisory Mission.

Progress of work regarding development projects in the buffer zone

As part of its report, the Advisory Mission has recommended that all projects ‘be based on the integrated vision and master plan, after its technical review by the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies’. Considering this, a progress on the development projects is provided as part of the State of Conservation Report.

The Landscape Mauritius Port Louis Waterfront Phase 2 project

Landscape Mauritius Ltd is steering the project of the development of the Port Louis Waterfront Redevelopment Phase 2. The phase 1 of the project was completed successfully in December 2018 in line with the Outline Planning Scheme for Port Louis (2015) considering its location on the outskirts of the buffer zone.

The phase 2 of the project has not yet started. A “Request for proposals for redevelopment, renovation, lease, operation & maintenance of buildings & associated infrastructures in buffer zone 1 of Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property” was prepared in April 2018 in consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund mandated to preserve, manage and promote the World Heritage Property. The RFP takes into consideration the framework established by the Planning Policy Guidance 6 guiding development in the buffer zone and other statutory documents as well as World Heritage Committee (WHC) decisions on the Core and Buffer Zones (e.g. WHC08/32.COM/7.1) and WHC decisions regarding the link between contemporary architecture and its historic context (e.g. WHC-08/32.COM/7.2).

The Request for Proposals (RFP) provides a development brief that states the objectives of the proposed development project which is to set up a cultural and leisure district with activities revolving around local cultural and heritage values and local traditions with the view to strengthen the cultural image of Port Louis, the capital city of Mauritius. The project aims at *‘the preservation, enhancement and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings while diminishing the threat of their demolition and degradation, to complement and enrich the waterfront value proposition’*.

Landscape Mauritius Ltd has not yet launched the Request for Proposals awaiting the green light from the Government of Mauritius.

As part of this project, Landscape Mauritius Ltd confirmed that the report of the Advisory Mission to Mauritius will be taken into consideration as part of the redevelopment project.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport Immigration Square Urban Terminal

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (MPILT) launched a request for proposals by private parties for the project of ‘Redevelopment, Modernisation and operation of the Immigration Square Urban Terminal at Port Louis’ on 20 February 2018 with closing date on 20 April 2018.

The aim of the project is to redevelop the bus station located opposite the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property that *‘has a high negative impact on the property and its setting’* as noted by the Advisory Mission. The Mission welcomed the project as the *‘redevelopment of Immigration Square is needed’* and indicated that *‘the proposed redevelopment has the potential for both high positive and high negative long-term impacts on the property’*.

After evaluation, the contract for the project was awarded to the selected Applicant namely Yihai International Investment Management Ltd in October 2018. The government has set up a ‘High Level Technical Committee’ under the chairmanship of Hon. N. Bodha, Minister of Public Infrastructure to monitor its implementation.

In December 2018, the Ministry of Arts and Culture submitted relevant documentation regarding this project to the World Heritage Centre for Technical Review as per the recommendation of the Advisory Mission to Mauritius.

The Metro Express Ltd Light Rail project and end station at Immigration Square

The Metro Express Ltd Light Rail project aims at introducing a light rail public transport system in Mauritius. The first phase was initiated with the award of contract in 2017 and works are currently underway to create a light rail line between Curepipe located on the highlands plateau in the centre of the island, and the capital city of Port Louis. The project plans to erect a terminus station at Parc à Boulet, a site adjacent to the World Heritage Property, with the rail alignment alongside the motorway bordering the World Heritage Property.

Considering that the terminus station lies near the World Heritage Property, the government of Mauritius has planned to conduct the works in Port Louis in the last phase of the project tentatively expected to commence between 2019 and 2021.

The nature of the works would involve:

- i. The construction of an LRT station comprising of a single platform;
- ii. A pedestrian bridge allowing connections with the Bus Station located opposite;
- iii. Rail track system reduced from two-way track to one-way track along the World Heritage Property to minimize its impact.

The Advisory Mission did not recommend to retain the location of the current proposed light rail station considering that it may contain archaeological remains associated with the World Heritage Property and may be considered for integration in the World Heritage Property in the future. It was also not recommended for the impact it may have in terms of sound and visual impact. The Mission also noted that the footbridge would need to be relocated to more a suitable area with no visual impact on the World Heritage Property.

The Metro Express Ltd steering the project has opted for the relocation of the footbridge to a more suitable area as suggested by the Advisory Mission. The other points raised are currently being looked into in order to comply with the recommendations of the mission. The final plans will be submitted to UNESCO for Technical Review.

The Ministry of Arts and Culture Inter-Continental Slavery Museum

The Ministry of Arts and Culture is currently working towards the establishment of the Inter-Continental Slavery Museum at the Ex-Military Hospital, a building listed as National Heritage dated 1740 located in the vicinity of the World Heritage Property. The Advisory Mission indicated that *“The ideal of establishing the Inter-Continental Slavery Museum is a laudable idea and the mission supports this idea.”*

The Ministry of Arts and Culture has enlisted the services of consultants to conduct a preliminary study and survey for the setting up of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum in November 2018. The set date for the submission of the final preliminary survey is on 29 January 2019.

Concurrently, a technical team chaired by the representative of the National Heritage Fund qualified in archaeology was set up to address the need for a detailed architectural, archaeological and historical survey of the Ex-Military Hospital in line with the recommendation of the Advisory Mission. At the same time, the Ministry is about to launch a tender to enlist the services of a land surveyor in order to produce detailed plans of the National Heritage building.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

[Note: this report will be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre’s State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>). Should your State Party request that the full report should not be uploaded, only the 1-page executive summary provided in point (1.) above will be uploaded for public access].

6. Signature of the Authority

Annex 1

Decisions and Recommendations of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO regarding Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site

Recommendations of UNESCO	Actions undertaken by the State Party
<p>2006 - Decision 30 COM 8B.33</p> <p>The World Heritage Committee, Having examined Documents WHC-06/30.COM/8B and WHC-06/30.COM/INF.8B.1, Inscribes Aapravasi Ghat, Mauritius, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (vi):</p> <p>Criterion (vi): Aapravasi Ghat, as the first site chosen by the British Government in 1834 for the 'great experiment' in the use of indentured, rather than slave labour, is strongly associated with memories of almost half a million indentured labourers moving from India to Mauritius to work on sugar canes plantations or to be transhipped to other parts of the World.</p> <p>Recommends that the State Party and other interested parties:</p> <p>a) Undertake research on indentured labour to consider the extent, scope and impact of the indentured labour Diaspora around the world; b) Consider the possibility of inscribing the Aapravasi Ghat archives for the UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aapravasi Ghat Conservation Project to meet the criteria of authenticity and integrity (2004-2010) for inscription on the World Heritage List - Submission of the Nomination Dossier for the Aapravasi Ghat (February 2005) - Preparation and submission to the World Heritage Centre of the Management Plan for the Aapravasi Ghat (2006)

Recommendations of UNESCO	Actions undertaken by the State Party
<p>2010 - Decisions Adopted By the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session (Brasilia, 25 July - 03 August 2010) WHC.10 /34.COM /20 Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius) (C 1227) Decision: 34 COM 7B.49</p> <p>The World Heritage Committee,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having examined Document WHC-10/34.COM/7B.Add, 2. Recalling Decision 30 COM 8B.33, adopted at its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006), 3. Notes with concern the recent high degree of loss of historic buildings within the buffer zone through demolitions, the apparent lack of legal protection of the buffer zone and lack of planning policies; 4. Urges the State Party to halt any demolitions in the buffer zone until adequate planning and legal policies are in place; 5. Also notes the development of the Aapravasi Ghat Planning Policy Guidance document, and encourages its official adoption at the earliest opportunity; 6. Reiterates its request to the State Party to complete the management plan for the property to include the development and conservation of the buffer zone, and archaeological and tourism strategies, and to regulate restoration work undertaken to date; 7. Also reiterates its recommendation that the State Party undertake research on indentured labour to consider the extent, scope and impact of the indentured labour diaspora around the world and that the detailed archives connected with the property be considered to be put forward for UNESCO's Memory of the World Register; 8. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2011, a report on the state of conservation of the property, and in particular on actions taken to halt demolitions within the buffer zone, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of the Planning Policy Guidance 6 for Aapravasi Ghat Buffer Zone providing a planning tool to direct development towards the regeneration and rehabilitation of the heritage in Port Louis (as per the vision of ICOMOS and UNESCO "heritage as a driver for development") - Adoption and issue of the Planning Policy Guidance 6 by the Government of Mauritius in June 2011 - Amendments made to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act (2001) o The Local Government Act (2003) To cater for the legal definition of the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat and the creation of the Technical Committee (TC) to assess all applications in the Buffer Zone. The TC is entrusted to implement PPG 6. - Research projects including a proposal for the Indentured Labour Route project and the Inventory of elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) for which funds were received from UNESCO. - Organisation of an International Conference on Indenture held in December 2011; and a second conference in November 2014. - Several articles and books were published by the AGTF on research on indenture. - Preparation of the nomination dossier for the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat Archives on the Memory of the World Register. Same was submitted in February 2012.

Recommendations of UNESCO	Actions undertaken by the State Party
<p>2011 - 35 COM 7B.41 Extract of the Decisions adopted the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011)</p> <p>The World Heritage Committee,</p> <p><u>Having examined</u> Document WHC-11/35.COM/7B, <u>Recalling</u> Decision 34 COM 7B.49, adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010),</p> <p><u>Takes note</u> of the State Party's official adoption of the Planning Policy Guidance, the main purpose of which is to control, together with other existing tools, the development, legitimate aspirations and change in the buffer zone of Aapravasi Ghat in order to protect the property's Outstanding Universal Value;</p> <p><u>Acknowledges</u> the progress made in undertaking research on indentured labour;</p> <p><u>Regrets</u> that the State Party has not completed the Management Plan for the property which impedes the full enforcement of the Planning Policy Guidance, and urges for a finalization of the plan before September 2011;</p> <p><u>Reiterates</u> its request to the State Party to prepare as a matter of urgency a structured system of coordination among key institutional stakeholders for the implementation of the Management Plan and the Conservation Manual in order to allow full enforcement of the Planning Policy Guidance;</p> <p><u>Encourages</u> the State Party to continue halting any demolition or any inadequate development in the buffer zone until the Management Plan and the Conservation Manual are prepared;</p> <p><u>Requests</u> the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property, to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Planning Policy Guidance in sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;</p> <p><u>Also requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2012, a report on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of the revised Management Plan 2013-2018. - Several workshops as part of the preparation of the Management Plan in order to optimize coordination among stakeholders and integrated management of the WHS. - Preparation and finalization of the Conservation Manual. - Preparation and adoption of Terms of Reference for the Technical Committee (applications in the buffer zone). - Reactive Monitoring Mission of UNESCO was invited to Aapravasi Ghat from 19 to 23 March 2012 and submitted its report to UNESCO.

Recommendations of UNESCO	Actions undertaken by the State Party
<p>2012 - Extract of the Decisions adopted the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session (36 COM 7B.45; UNESCO, 2012)</p> <p>The World Heritage Committee,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC-12/36.COM/7B.Add, 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision 35 COM 7B.41, adopted at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the progress made by the State Party in improving the management system for the property and <u>urges</u> it to secure the necessary resources for its effective operation; 4. <u>Notes</u> the results of the March 2012 reactive monitoring mission and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to implement its recommendations, with particular emphasis on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Finalize the updating of the management plan and submit it to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for consideration and review, b) Develop a capacity building strategy to ensure that qualified conservation and management professionals are available to support the work of the Technical Committee, c) Improve collaboration mechanisms to ensure the adequate protection and management of the buffer zones and better utilise mechanisms such as the consultative meeting to strengthen participatory decision-making, d) Increase awareness raising activities and produce summaries of existing planning tools for easier consultation by different public users; 5. <u>Requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2014, a report on the state of conservation of the property and on the steps taken to implement the recommendations set out above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in 2014. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of Management Plan 2013-2018: submission to the Cabinet of Ministers who gave approval on 24 January 2014. - The Management Plan for the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in January 2014 for consideration during the 38e session of the World Heritage Committee (38COM) at Doha, Qatar held between 15 and 25 June 2014. - The AGTF organised several meetings to set up a capacity building strategy. - The summaries of existing planning tools were completed and posted on the website of the AGTF and CCPL. - The Consultative Committee was established as an annual activity to raise awareness on the Aapravasi Ghat and its activities. - The recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring Mission were examined and the Local Economic Development Plan project for the Buffer Zone was included as a project in the Management Plan to address the issues raised by the Community and by the UNESCO regarding development in the buffer zone.

Recommendations of UNESCO	Actions undertaken by the State Party
<p>2014 Decisions WHC – 14/38. COM/16 Decision 38 COM 7B.98 38th session held in Doha, Qatar from 15 to 25 June 2014</p> <p>The World Heritage Committee,</p> <p>5. Having examined Document WHC-4/38.COM/7B.Add,</p> <p>6. Takes note with satisfaction of the measures taken by the States Parties concerned to address its previous requests to mitigate the threats on the Outstanding Universal Value of the following World Heritage properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town of Luang Prabang (Lao People's Democratic Republic), - Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments (Russian Federation), - Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison (Barbados), - Port, Fortresses and Group of Monuments, Cartagena (Colombia), - Pre-Hispanic City of Teotihuacan (Mexico), - Historic Quarter of the City of Colonia del Sacramento (Uruguay), - Royal Palaces of Abomey (Benin), - Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela (Ethiopia), - Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius); <p>7. Encourages the States Parties concerned to pursue their efforts to ensure the conservation of World Heritage properties;</p> <p>8. Reminds the States Parties concerned to inform the World Heritage Centre in due course about any major development project that may negatively impact the Outstanding Universal Value of a property, before any irreversible decisions are made, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following the positive recommendations, the Management Plan 2013-2018 is being implemented.