

Date: 18 March 2019

**STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT BY THE STATE PARTY
(UZBEKISTAN)**

**WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY: “SAMARKAND – CROSSROAD OF
CULTURES”**

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

Samarkand – Crossroad of Culture (Uzbekistan) (C 603 rev)

1. Executive Summary

“Samarkand – Crossroad of Cultures” was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001 according to criteria (i), (ii) and (iv). The Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property was adopted in 2012.

The property is under the State protection, more specifically under the responsibility of the Samarkand Regional Inspection for the Protection and Utilization of Monuments of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in cooperation with the State Committee for Architecture. The Management framework acknowledged by the World Heritage Committee in 2013 guides the management activities within the property and the revision of this plan is under preparation.

The State of Conservation report was required by the Secretariat following information received from the delegation of Uzbekistan during the meeting held on UNESCO premises on 14 December 2018, as well as information received from third party notably concerning the “Samarkand City” project and reported demolition and redevelopment, the need for planning documents and deficiency in the use of HIA before the commencement of construction.

Nowadays, important urban transformations are taking place in Samarkand, meant to improve the quality city’s built and social fabric. The city authorities are working together with experts and communities on the new Master Plan for Samarkand city. This plan, to be completed soon, is a turning point in the city’s urban development approach that puts cultural and natural assets of the city, and especially its outstanding urban heritage and cultural diversity at the heart of its urban policies.

In the last two years, important efforts have been made to preserve the city’s urban heritage while making Samarkand a more attractive and sustainable city. This is reflected in the unprecedented mobilization of human and financial resources to enhance the regulatory system and planning tools, produce inventories and create

databases to be used in the management of the historic city, restore and maintain the main monuments and enhance their settings, improve public participation and financial mechanisms. The coordination among management stakeholders was enhanced and a strong collaborative platform for heritage protection and sustainable development has been created. This new impetus backed by a strong political support will allow strengthening the protection and management of the city's urban heritage and ensuring its sustainable development in the years to come.

The recent efforts made at both national and local levels include in particular:

- a) A series of important decrees aimed at strengthening the protection and management of cultural heritage have been issued in 2018 and 2019, as follows:
 - Presidential decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan concerning measures on preservation of objects of cultural and archeological heritage, adopted on 16 January, 2018.
 - Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, of 9 June 2018, concerning the protection of the territory inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, which was given the status of "Territory Under Special Protection".
 - Decree nr. PK-4068 of 19 December 2018, issued by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, regarding the strengthening of the protection, management and enhancement of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
 - First Protocol of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 15 February 2019 regarding the preparation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit of 2022.
 - Second Protocol of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 7 March 2019 regarding the preparation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit of 2022.
- b) The local government of Samarkand is currently taking corrective measures to remove or reduce the bulk of the recent and on-going insensitive developments that detract from the character of the historic area based on the revocation by the Court of Justice of the building permits that present deficiencies (i.e. violation of the building permit procedure (not visaed by the Inspection), or non-compliance with the building permit). Moreover, every proposal that interferes with the adjoining historical structures or is situated in a heritage-sensitive context is now carefully considered by the Inspection and every change is controlled by the site manager.

- c) The national government has tasked the State enterprise “Tashkent research and design institute for urban planning” to speed-up the preparation of the draft Master Plan of the city of Samarkand and the Project of Detailed Planning for its historic center, including the buffer zone.
- d) A working group including a number of specialized organizations has been created under the authority of the Regional and City Government to solve several issues related to the development of the Master Plan for Samarkand city. The Regional Inspection for the protection of objects of cultural heritage of Samarkand is part of this working group to ensure that urban heritage of the protected area and its buffer zone are effectively protected by this plan and that new development do not have adverse impacts on the OUV of the property.
- e) Under the supervision of the working group, in February 2019, the inventory of the whole city began. Its scope is to update the cadaster and the list of protected buildings, and create digitized maps, through a participatory process. A total of 490 objects of cultural heritage were identified and mapped in order to be included in the Project of Detailed Planning (PDP) of the Master Plan of Samarkand.
- f) A specialized company is preparing a digital model of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone (or the photomap), using drones - to be completed end of March 2019, according to the Protocol of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan regarding the preparation of the SCO (15 February 2019). Until now, all of the 79 mahallas within this territory have been surveyed, and the survey data for 24 mahallas within the property have been already transferred to the plan.
- g) The working group including the planning team for the Master Plan of Samarkand, the Regional Inspection and the Samarkand Department of State cadaster, with the active involvement of the Municipality and Governorate, are currently preparing the “Development Control of the Historic Center of Samarkand and its Buffer Zones”. Furthermore, obligation for providing a Heritage Impact Assessment for any development project that may affect the OUV of the World Heritage property will be inscribed in the Master Plan.
- h) A new Draft traffic scheme, currently under preparation in the framework of the city’s Master Plan, foresees the development of new transport roads outside the historic area, with the aim of relieving the traffic in this sensitive area. The idea of a transit road that passed through the historic centre, included in the aborted draft plan of 2004, has been abandoned, and alternative solutions, respectful for city’s heritage, have been adopted. No modification of the size and shape of existing streets within the property has been proposed in the new Master Plan. All heavy transport is already

removed from the historic center and a tramway line has been introduced in 2017, outside the historic core. Moreover, several pedestrian streets have been created within the property and other streets are considered for pedestrianization.

- i) All the ancient irrigation canals which were blocked and toxic because of garbage and debris dumping are being currently cleaned up and rehabilitated.
- j) Following the Presidential Order of 19 December 2018, the Regional Inspection will be strengthened and its human, financial, and technical resources will be enhanced: the personnel will increase from 3 to 15 persons, the place will be adequately equipped, the operating budget will be substantially increased, and a car with driver will be provided.
- k) In 2016, the Regional Inspection started to undertake a condition survey of all the built-up structures of the historic area of the city of Samarkand with a view to create a register and map of “Buildings at Risk” and plan accordingly the necessary works to be carried out, in priority order, in the framework of a Conservation Program. This work is still ongoing.
- l) The Regional Inspection, together with the local government, is seeking funding for the conservation and rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites.
- m) The Regional Inspection started to review the actual boundaries of the property and the buffer zone in order to ensure an enhanced protection of the OUV attributes of the property. In occasion of the recent inventory work and related studies, several deficiencies have been detected, which require a minor modification of boundaries of both property and buffer zone. The request will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre.
- n) The Regional Inspection together with the local government is working with media to build awareness of heritage conservation among residents. The public is informed about the preservation issues of Samarkand and on-going projects and round tables involving experts and representatives of the public are organized to clarify aspects related to the conservation and sustainable development of the historic city.

Regarding the development issues in Samarkand raised by the World Heritage Centre, the State Party informed the World Heritage Centre, in December 2018, about the intention to build hotel facilities necessary for tourism development and for hosting the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit of 2022 in Samarkand. In order to ensure that this new development will not impact negatively the OUV of the World Heritage property during the preparation of the city Master Plan and revision of the Management Plan, a team of national and international experts are currently preparing detailed guidelines for new

construction on every identified site, based on survey, mapping and analysis of the building sites and their settings - to be considered in designing the development proposals. A copy of this report and related studies will be submitted to the World Heritage Center. The conceptual designs will be examined in compliance with the aforementioned guidelines and the final design proposals together with Heritage Impact Assessments will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS.

Lastly, we would like to underline that no development proposal has been yet finalized, and no construction activity started on any of these potential development sites, including “Samarkand City Tourist Zone”, a multifunctional project located in the buffer zone of the property. Implementation will start only when approval by UNESCO and ICOMOS is granted on all projects.