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ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR L'EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DU PATRIMOINE
MONDIAL, CULTUREL ET NATUREL

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE / COMITE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

Thirty-second session / Trente et deuxième session

Quebec City, Canada / Quebec, Canada
2 – 10 July 2008 / 2 – 10 juillet 2008

Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of properties
inscribed on the
World Heritage List and/or on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Point 7 de l'Ordre du jour provisoire: Etat de conservation de biens
inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et/ou sur la Liste du
patrimoine mondial en péril

JOINT UNESCO(WHC)/ICOMOS EXPERT MISSION REPORT / RAPPORT
DE MISSION CONJOINTE DES EXPERTS DE L'UNESCO (CPM) ET DE
L'ICOMOS

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA AND BAGRATI
CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY (GEORGIA) / MONUMENTS
HISTORIQUES DE MTSKHETA ET CATHÉDRALE DE BAGRATI ET
MONASTÈRE DE GHÉLATI (GEORGIE)

2 – 10 June 2008 / 2 – 10 juin 2008

This mission report should be read in conjunction with Document /
Ce rapport de mission doit être lu conjointement avec le document suivant :
WHC-08/32.COM/7B.ADD



International Council on
Monuments and Sites
Conseil International
des Monuments et des Sites

REPORT ON THE MISSION TO HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA AND BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY

GEORGIA

FROM 2 TO 10 June 2008



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

1.1. Justification of the mission (terms of reference, itinerary, programme and composition of mission team provided in Annex I)

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1.2. THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

- Inscription history
- Inscription criteria and World Heritage values
- Integrity issues raised in the IUCN evaluation report at time of inscription
- Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau (provided in Annex II.1)

1.3. THE BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY

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- Inscription history
- Inscription criteria and World Heritage values
- Integrity issues raised in the IUCN evaluation report at time of inscription
- Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau (provided in Annex II.2)
- Possible revision of the criteria of Outstanding Universal Value

2 NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

- Protected area legislation
- Management structure and institutional framework

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3 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES / THREATS

- Management effectiveness
- Positive or negative developments in the conservation of the property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee
- Information on any threat or damage to or loss of outstanding universal value, integrity and/or authenticity for which the property was inscribed

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4 ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

- Review whether the values, on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the conditions of integrity are being maintained
- Review any follow-up measures to previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property and measures which the State Party plans to take to protect the outstanding universal value of the property

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5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations for any additional action to be taken by the State Party, including draft recommendations to the World Heritage Committee

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- Recommendation as to whether the level of threats to the property warrants the property being placed on or removed of the List of World Heritage in Danger

6 ANNEXES

- I. Terms of reference, itinerary, programme, composition of mission team

- II. Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The members of the mission are extremely grateful to the authorities of Georgia for their hospitality, support, availability and assistance, and would like to convey their gratitude especially to Dr Nikoloz Vacheishvili, Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia.

The members of the mission were honored by the audience with His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II, and would like to express their thanks to the members of the Centre for Architecture, Restoration and Arts of the Patriarchy of Georgia, for their active participation to the meetings, presentations and site visits.

Special thanks go to all staff of the Cultural Heritage Department of the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia, in particular to Ms Leila Tumanishvili, Head of the Department, who provided valuable information on the current situation of the World Heritage property during the meetings and assisted in clarifying many of the complex issues and to Mr Nikoloz Antidze, Head of the Monitoring Division, who accompanied the mission to the World Heritage properties, facilitated meetings with various experts, local officials and stakeholders interested in the conservation and protection of the World Heritage properties in Georgia.

The mission wishes to thank Dr Temur Bibiluri, Director of the Greater Mtskheta Archaeological Museum-Reserve and to Mr Omar Lanchava, Director of Kutaisi State Museum, who provided useful information during the site visits.

Particular thanks go as well to the Georgian National Commission for UNESCO and its Secretary-General Ms Ketevan Kandelaki, and to the Georgian World Heritage Committee and its Chair Mr Irakli Metreveli, who facilitated the arrangements and assisted to the organization of the mission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The object of the mission was to review the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta and the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994.

Following numerous consultations with national authorities and site managers, and in light of on-site visits to the World Heritage properties, the mission noted the substantive efforts of the authorities in defining and establishing the Cultural Heritage Programme process, including legal assessments and relevant conservation and protection measures. While the general state of conservation of both properties is still satisfactory, the mission observed, at the time of the visit, some negative developments in the protection of the properties.

The summary conclusions and key recommendations of the mission are as follows:

The Historical Monuments of Mtskheta

- Following the information received about the distribution or sale of lands situated in the vicinity of the monuments or within the protected areas of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta via a privatization process, the mission strongly urged the authorities to give highest priority to halting immediately any inappropriate processes (land distribution or sale, construction permits or works) before the boundary clarification is completed, as well as before the preparation and legal approval of the

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"Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" defining the World Heritage property's status, the World Heritage property's strict protected areas and its buffer zones with all necessary restrictive regulations;

- The mission recalled previous requests of the World Heritage Committee concerning the development of an integrated management plan for the property;
- The mission urged the authorities to immediately start the implementation of an integrated multistakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Monastery in coordination with ICCROM and relevant international experts on stone conservation;
- The mission recommended that the authorities undertake a global monitoring of structural stability of the building and special intervention for conservation of the paintings of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral;
- The mission expressed its serious concern about the state of conservation of the archaeological sites as components of the World Heritage property and its progressive deterioration and the abandonment of effort by the authorities to conserve this archaeological area. It noted that this loss has a strong negative impact on the outstanding universal value, authenticity and integrity of the site, and therefore, urged the authorities to develop a special programme on protection of all archaeological components of the World Heritage property.

The Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery

- The mission recommended that the authorities immediately start preventive conservation work on the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex, and develop, in coordination with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, a long-term programme for the systematic conservation of the mural paintings and mosaics with the involvement and collaboration of international specialists in this domain;
- The mission was informed of the State Party's intention to prepare a new reconstruction project for Bagrati Cathedral in order to recreate its initial religious use and functions. Recalling earlier discussions among the Advisory Bodies, international experts and the World Heritage Committee, as well as noting that in accordance with Paragraph 86 of the *Operational Guidelines* the reconstruction of historic buildings is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances, the mission requested that the authorities provide to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies complete and detailed documentation concerning this project for review by the World Heritage Committee;
- The mission requested the authorities to urgently prepare, approve and provide to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, the management plan of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex, including the boundaries clarification document clearly indicating its buffer zones.

The general recommendations of the mission concerns:

- the establishment of a **Special State Commission on World Heritage** in order to reinforce institutional coordination and to officially share the responsibilities between all relevant State institutions and national, local and religious authorities, to ensure an appropriate legal protection and management of this property;
- the preparation and legal approval of the "**Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia**" defining the World Heritage property's

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status, the World Heritage property's strict protected areas and its buffer zones with all necessary restrictive regulations;

- the organization of an **awareness-raising campaign** for all World Heritage properties in Georgia;
- the preparation of an **international donors conference** designed to address the major problems identified for all World Heritage properties in Georgia.

1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

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1.1. Justification of the mission (terms of reference, itinerary, programme and composition of mission team provided in the Annex)

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The World Heritage Committee, at its 31th session (Christchurch, 2007), requested the State Party to provide a progress report to the World Heritage Centre on 1 February 2008 for examination by the Committee at its 32nd session in 2008, as well as to invite a reactive monitoring mission in order to review the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta and the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994 (**Decisions 31 COM 7B.96 and 31 COM 7B.97**).

The joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission was carried out from 2 to 10 June 2008 to the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta and the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery (Georgia).

The mission met the representatives of the Ministry of Culture, Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Mtskheta City and the site managers.

1.2. THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

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Inscription history

The outstanding universal value of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta is defined by the following:

Justification provided by the State Party :

City-museum, architectural reserve, Mtskheta is a multi-layered monument, testifying to the great scope of building activity and high culture of the country. Preserved architectural monuments and unearthed archaeological material testify to the high artistic value of building and minor arts in various epochs, beginning from the 2nd mill. B.C. to today.

The architectural monuments of Mtskheta, being stagemaking in the development of Georgian architecture are at the same time extremely significant for the study of the medieval architecture of the whole Christendom. Besides they are striking examples of the unity of architecture with the surrounding landscape.

Of special value from the artistic and historical points of view are the monuments of monumental painting (mosaic floor in "Dionysius Maison" in Szalisa, 2nd c. A.D.) and metalwork (goldsmithery) discovered in Mtskheta. Special place in semitic epigraphics is occupied by Armagi inscriptions, giving vast valuable data for the study of the written language in general and making it possible to deal with the origin of Georgian written language anew.

ADVISORY BODY STATEMENT:

The nomination dossier submitted by the Republic of Georgia was accompanied by a number of books and other documents. Most of these are written in Russian or Georgian, neither of which is a working language of the World Heritage Convention. The most useful book, *Georgien: Wehrbauten und Kirchen*, is in German, another non-working language. More importantly, the only map provided showing the "Protective Zones of Mtskheta", was a very small-scale photographic print of a much larger map; the barely decipherable legends were, in any case, all in Georgian. However, new maps showing the areas proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List, together with buffer zones, were supplied to the mission, together with a summary of the Georgian protection legislation, as required by the *Operational Guidelines*.

Recommendation: That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iii and iv.

Inscription criteria and World Heritage values

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The nominated property of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta correspond to criteria (iii), (iv).

Criterion iii: The group of churches at Mtskheta bear testimony to the high level and art and culture of the vanished Kingdom of Georgia, which played an outstanding role in the medieval history of its region.

Criterion iv: The historic churches of Mtskheta are outstanding examples of medieval ecclesiastical architecture in the Caucasus region.

Bureau (July 1994): The Bureau recommended the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List and suggested to the State Party to change the name to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta".

Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau (provided in Annex II.1).

1.3. THE BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY

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Inscription history

Justification provided by the State Party :

Gelati Monastery

Gelati ensemble is a set of well preserved historical monuments. It is especially valuable for the preserved monuments of architecture, mosaic, mural painting, metalwork and enamel. Gelati was not only a monastery, but a centre of science and education, while the Academy, founded in the monastery, was one of the most significant centres of culture in the ancient Georgia. High skill of execution and expressiveness of the mosaic preserved in Gelati Monastery place it among the outstanding artistic monuments of the worldwide significance. Mural painting, chronological range of which comprises 12th-17th c., is a peculiar significant museum of Georgian monumental painting. Up to recently, the unique samples of Georgian metalwork were kept in Gelati; some of them are adorned with enamels, for instance 12th c. magnificent Khakhuli triptych 12-17th cc. icons are

8/39

distinguished by lavish ornamentation and masterly execution. Illuminated manuscripts kept in Gelati are also the unique samples of Georgian culture.

Thus, Gelati monastery due to its architectural merits and magnificent samples of Georgian culture kept in it, is the unique treasury of culture. Such a collection of excellent monuments of high artistic value, gathered in a single ensemble, is a rare case in the history of the world culture.

Bagrati Cathedral

The outer appearance of the building is monumental and grand, varied and dynamic. Ornamental decoration contributes to the picturesqueness of the cathedral. The building amazes and fascinates the viewer by perfect proportions, free and perfect execution of the mouldings, ornaments, arches, light constructions.

Bagrati cathedral ornamentation makes it possible to trace the evolution undergone by Georgian architectural ornament in less than half a century; this ornamentation is an excellent sample of the world architectural plastics.

High artistic value of Bagrati cathedral goes far beyond the local significance. It is one of the best monuments of the medieval Christian architecture.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

[...] Detailed maps showing the areas proposed for inscription and the buffer zones, which had been omitted from the nomination dossier, were supplied to the mission. [...] That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion iv.

Inscription criteria and World Heritage values

The nominated property of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery correspond to criteria (iv) :

Criterion iv: Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery represent the highest flowering of the architecture of medieval Georgia.

Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau (provided in Annex II.2)

Possible revision of the criteria of Outstanding Universal Value

The authorities mentioned in the 2007 state of conservation report, proposals for a new statement of authenticity/integrity, and a new approach to the justification of the property, including possible re-evaluation of the monuments and possible re-nomination under two additional criteria :

- ***criterion (i)*** : Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery are the masterpieces of human creative genius;
- ***criterion (vi)***: Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery are the monuments directly associated with the historic and religious events of Christianity, living traditions of the area and with the wall painting of outstanding significance.

The mission did not consider that a re-nomination of the property under new criteria would be justified. However, the State Party should provide a draft of Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

2 NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

2.1. Protected area legislation / World Heritage boundaries and buffer zones

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At the time of inscription, both properties were protected by the 1947 Law of protection of the Monuments of GSSR.

Five years after the inscription, the protection of the monuments was based on the 1999 Georgian Law on Cultural Heritage Protection (with amendments in 2002 and 2004).

The new Georgian Law on Cultural Heritage was adopted in June 2007. Two protection zones were defined by this legal instrument:

- **Individual protected area** composed of the zone of physical protection and the zone of visual protection (1000 m for the World Heritage properties). This area is applied automatically with the attribution of the status of monument and could be extended by the Ministerial Decree;

The zone of physical protection is defined around the monuments (no less than 50 m) in order to protect against any threats. All constructions are forbidden which are not beneficial for the monuments protection or its landscape.

- **General protected area** composed by the immovable monuments protection zone, the construction regulation zone, the historic landscape protection zone and archaeological protection zone.

The historic landscape protection zone has to be free of any constructions and objects which do not have any historical value. In this area, the following activities could be carried out :

- research;
- rehabilitation works of historically valuable buildings
- new authorized constructions which respond to the public interest;
- horizontal constructions which do not modify the sense of the historic relief and space, and do not disturb the visual appreciation of the historic monuments.

In accordance with the Cultural Heritage Law and the Urban Planning Law, the Protected areas Plans and the Historic-Cultural Plans constitute the base for all urban planning documentation, including the Land Use Plans and the General Plans.

Historic Monuments of Mtskheta

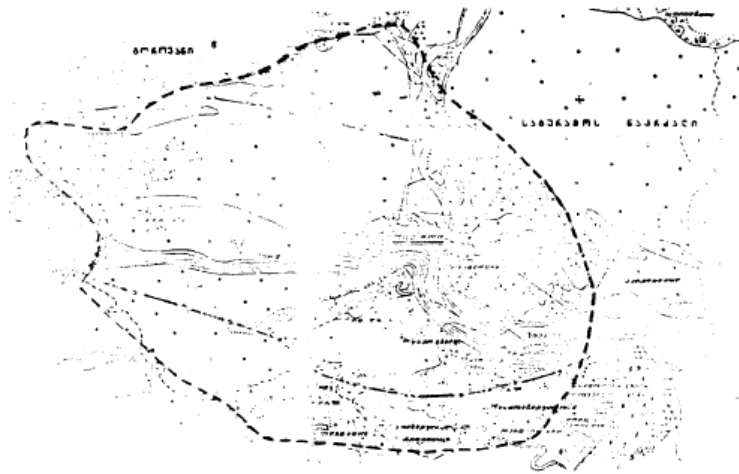
The mission evaluated the protection zones of Mtskheta approved by the joint Order of the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Economic Development "On the definition of the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones in Mtskheta" issued on 27 October 2006.

The protection zones (the archaeological zone, the immovable monuments protection zone, the construction regulation zone, the landscape protection zone), approved in conformity with the new legislation, are not consistent with the areas of strict protection of the World Heritage property as inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994.

The construction regulation zone mentioned in this document is proposed by the authorities as a buffer zone. All proposed zones are inadequate and do not correspond to the boundaries of protected areas of Mtskheta, as inscribed in 1994. This situation illustrates that the above-mentioned Order was prepared without any link with the World Heritage Convention text, its *Operational Guidelines* and the Committee's decisions.

10/39

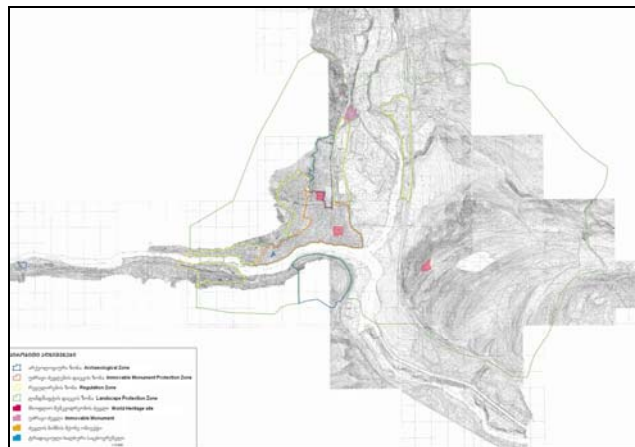
In addition, no area approved at the national level by this Order corresponds with the perimeter of protection areas of Mtskheta or its monuments, including the protection area of Jvari, as submitted by the Georgian Government and inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994, and which constitute the legal document within the framework of the World Heritage Convention.



Protected zones of Mtskheta as inscribed in 1994



Protected zone of Jvari as inscribed in 1994



Mtskheta Heritage Protection Zones approved at national level in 2006

At this time, the main threat to the World Heritage property of the Historic Monuments of Mtskheta, is the distribution or sale via the privatization process of lands situated in the vicinity of the monuments or within the protected area (as inscribed) of the property without any detailed legal regulations officially approved for the World Heritage property. The municipality is identifying potential land for privatization, a process which has been approved by the Ministry of Economic Development. Such proposals submitted by the municipality have already been approved without any consultation of nomination dossier submitted by the Georgian authorities during the inscription of property.

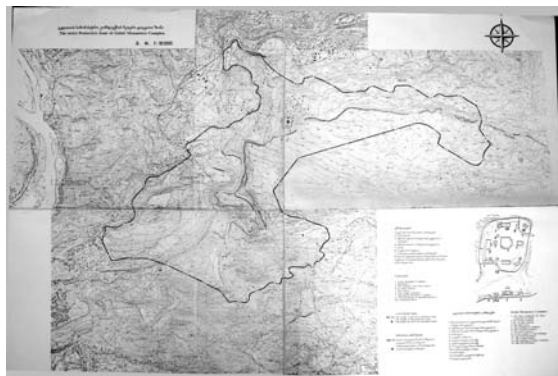


Historical landscape of Mtskheta

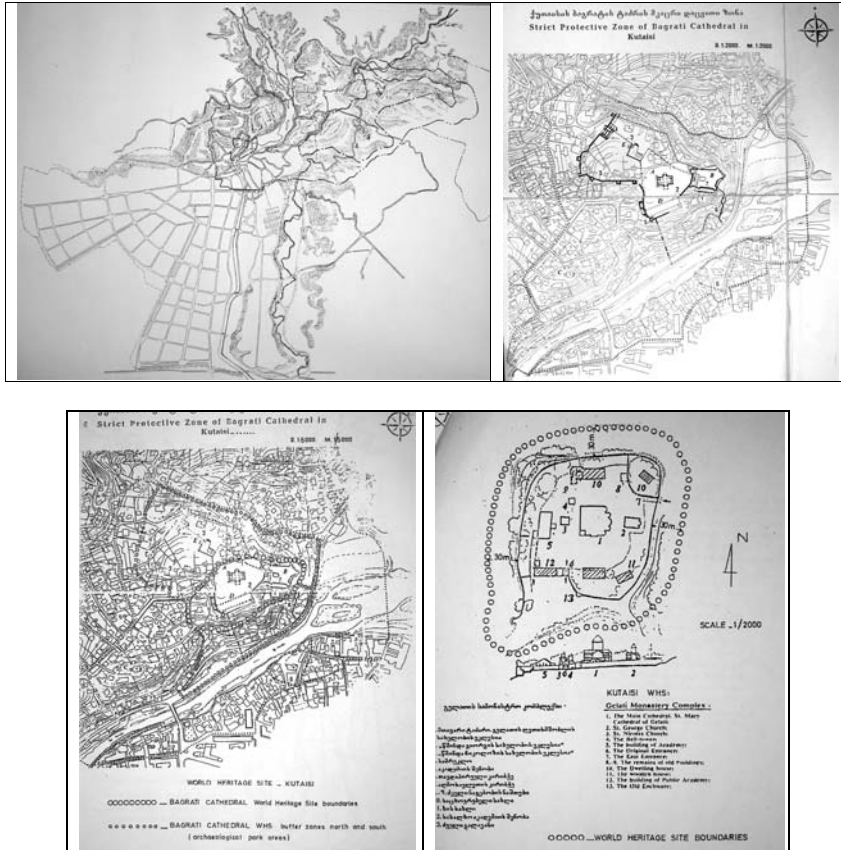
The mission reminded the authorities about the Retrospective Inventory project, and requested that they submit original copies of the 1:2,000-scale maps, showing the boundaries of the inscribed World Heritage property and its buffer zones, indicating the latitude and longitude (or UTM) coordinates for at least four points on the maps to allow the Centre to digitise the map (submission of an equivalent GIS file would be an suitable substitute for provision of coordinates). The size in hectares of each of the properties and their buffer zones as represented by the above maps also needs to be submitted.

The Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery

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Protective Zones of Gelati Monastery Complex



"Protective Zones of Gelati Monastery Complex, Bagrati Cathedral in Kutaisi and their adjoining territory in the context of General Plan of Town Development." (1993).

The mission also reminded the authorities about the Retrospective Inventory project, and requested that they submit original copies of the 1:2,000-scale maps, showing the boundaries of this World Heritage property and its buffer zones, indicating the latitude and longitude (or UTM) coordinates for at least four points on the maps to allow the Centre to digitise the map (submission of an equivalent GIS file would be an suitable substitute for provision of coordinates). The size in hectares of each of the properties and their buffer zones as represented by the above maps also needs to be submitted.

In general, concerning both World Heritage properties, the mission recommended:

- to inventory any lands already distributed within the existing protected areas of the World Heritage properties and its future buffer zone, and to stop any construction permits and works ;
- to halt immediately any land distribution or sale, as well as any constructions within the protected areas of World Heritage properties as inscribed in 1994, before the boundary clarification has been completed and before the preparation and legal approval in conformity with the Georgian Law on Cultural Heritage of 2007 and all relevant Laws (land use, urban planning) of the following documents:

Joint mission report
Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery
Georgia

- "Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" defining the World Heritage property's status, the World Heritage properties' strict protected areas and its buffer zones with all necessary restrictive regulations,
- boundaries clarification document to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee within the framework of the Retrospective Inventory, and if relevant, the boundaries modification proposal in order to clarify the exact perimeter of the protected areas of the World Heritage property and its buffer zones. The mission underlined that these documents have to be prepared in conformity with the *Operational Guidelines*, as well as the Committee's decisions concerning buffer zones.
- Plan of the protected areas of the World Heritage properties ("Historic-Cultural general Plan"), a Land Use Plan ("Plan of regulation") and a Master Plan ("General urban Plan") of Mtskheta, Kutaisi and its region where geographically situated the properties.

Management Plan

No management plan exists for the World Heritage properties in Georgia. The mission noted that the authorities were not familiar with the concept of a management plan. Such a plan does not correspond to existing Georgian plans, documents or rules. In December of each year, the Ministry of Culture prepares the Cultural Heritage Programme for one year. All activities and projects having received appropriate financial approval by the Ministry of Economic Development, can be implemented through the "tender" process.

In accordance with Georgian legislation, the preparation of a Plan of the protected areas ("Historic-Cultural general Plan") falls the responsibility of the under Ministry of Culture (via tender process). The Land Use Plan ("Plan of regulation") falls under the responsibility of the city Municipality and the Master Plan ("General urban Plan") falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Economic Development.

The mission recommended that the preparation of the management plans, including the Plans of the protected areas ("Historic-Cultural general Plan") for the World Heritage properties in Georgia, be added, as a priority, to the Cultural Heritage Programme which will be prepared in 2008.

2.2. Management structure and institutional framework

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The management, monitoring and survey of the properties are under supervision of the Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture. The Georgian World Heritage Committee was created in 2006 under this Ministry and is composed of representatives of relevant Ministries, to ensure interministerial coordination in World Heritage issues.

The Greater Mtskheta State Archaeological Museum-Reserve and Kutaisi Museum-Reserve under the Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture, are mentioned as the local site managers. However, these administrations do not ensure any function, as the World Heritage site manager.

The mission met representatives of the Georgian Church which received in its ownership, in accordance with the Constitutional Agreement concluded with the Georgian Government in October 2002, all ecclesiastic buildings, ruins and lands located in Georgia. The special Commission on Cultural Heritage was created by the Patriarch and is composed of representatives of the Georgian Church, Georgian experts and specialists.

14/39

The function of this Commission is still unclear. No legal power has been attributed to this Commission. The responsibility for cultural heritage, management, protected areas, rules of maintenance and use are determinate by the relevant State authorities, in accordance with existing legislation and in agreement with the Church. In accordance with the 2007 Law on Cultural Heritage and with this Constitutional Agreement the management of the cultural heritage properties is still under the State Party's authority, in agreement with the Church. All interventions need to be approved by both parties.

The mission noted the great interest of the Georgian Church authorities in the principles of protection of the World Heritage properties. Their representatives underlined that the landscape around the monuments constitutes an integral part of the heritage. The Church is ready to collaborate and take a part in the implementation of an integrated management plan.

The official document provided to the mission attests that the management and protection of the World Heritage monuments transferred to the Georgian Church is still under the supervision of the State authorities in agreement with the Church.

In general, the authorities noted a lack of qualified specialists in the domain of conservation, restoration and management of properties.

3 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES / THREATS

3.1. *Management effectiveness*

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The mission noted that no management system or clearly defined institutional framework exist in general for the World Heritage properties in Georgia.

Taking into account the necessity to involve numerous institutions and stakeholders in the process of establishment and approval of the legal protection documents, as well as of the management of the World Heritage properties, the mission recommended the establishment of a Special State Commission (or State Board) on World Heritage under the Cabinet of Ministers or the Prime-Minister in order to officially share the responsibilities between all relevant State institutions and national, local and religious authorities and to ensure an appropriate legal protection and management of this important and outstanding heritage in Georgia.

The mission also recommended that the status and functions of this "Commission", the action plan and the timeframe for the preparation, approval and implementation of above-mentioned documents and actions should be specified in the document concerning the establishment of this Commission.

3.2. *Positive or negative developments in the conservation of the properties since the last report to the World Heritage Committee*

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The Ministry of Culture, Monuments protection and Sport of Georgia submitted a state of conservation report dated 25 January 2008 confirming that no significant progresses have been made since the last Committee's decision.

3.3. *Information on any threat or damage to or loss of outstanding universal value, integrity and/or authenticity for which the property was inscribed*

The mission was concerned by the **land distribution** in the vicinity of the monuments and within the protected area (as inscribed) of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta which

15/39

appeared to occur without any detailed legal regulations, officially approved for the World Heritage property.

The mission was also concerned by the **state of conservation** of some of the components of the World Heritage properties of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta, in particular the Jvari Church and archaeological sites and the Bagrati Cathedral.

In accordance, with the *Guidelines for the inscription of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger (art. IV B Operational Guidelines)*, "...the Committee may inscribe a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger when ... the property is threatened by serious and specific danger (para. 177 *Operational Guidelines*). The property is faced with threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics, such are :

- i) modification of juridical status of the property diminishing the degree of its protection;
- ii) lack of conservation policy;
- iii) threatening effects of regional planning projects;
- iv) threatening effects of town planning;
- v) outbreak or threat of armed conflict;
- vi) gradual changes due to geological, climatic or other environmental factors.

In case of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta, the mission noted that **in the absence of substantial progress accomplished** by the State Party, the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009 **could examine the property with a view to consider its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

The mission recommended that the authorities submit, by 1 February 2009, to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies a progress report including all necessary documents requested by the mission.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

4.1. *Review whether the values, on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the conditions of integrity are being maintained*

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THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

a) Jvari Church

The mission underlined the serious problems at the Jvari Church. The general state of conservation of the monument is very critical due to the negative influence of natural conditions and climatic change. The conservation works of the Jvari Church should start immediately and involve international experts on stone conservation, as a follow up to the ICCROM training course organized in 2005.

The mission observed inappropriate restoration works which have been stopped until an appropriate conservation solution is found.



The mission noted that a new construction within the vicinity of the Jvari Church had been stopped, and recommended the removal of this inappropriate construction.

b) Svetitskhoveli Cathedral

The mission commented on structural problems at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral due to factors affecting the monument. The mission noted that no progress has been achieved in order to improve the global monitoring of the structures of the Cathedral. The mission recommended undertaking a global monitoring of the structural stability of the Cathedral and also undertaking special interventions for conservation of the important mural paintings of different periods in the interior of the Cathedral.



c) Samtavro Monastery

The authorities reported that stabilization works were completed between 2002 and 2003. The archaeological remains discovered during the reparation works were recovered by the new floor. The structure of the associated belfry outside of the church, which was in serious danger of collapse, was reinforced.

Within the direct vicinity of the church new monastic cells were recently built but those did not affect the functional integrity of the property. However, taking into account the necessity to continue scientific investigation of the area, the lands around the walls should be reserved for relevant archaeological excavations and research studies.

d) Archaeological components

The mission noted serious damage to the archaeological sites of the World Heritage property, which have been completely abandoned by the authorities. There are no conservation, protection and promotion activities in place and nothing has been suggested for the future. The mission confirmed that this part of the World Heritage property has completely lost its authenticity due to vandalism and absence of management.

17/39

Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery

Bagrati Cathedral

In January 2008, the President of Georgia and the Georgian Orthodox Church initiated the reconstruction project of the Bagrati Cathedral with the intention of restoring the initial religious use and functions of the Cathedral, which was previously discussed at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, 2004).



Bagrati Cathedral (exterior and interior views)

In 2004, ICOMOS took the view that any reconstruction must be carried out in keeping with the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its authenticity and therefore it would be more appropriate to retain the property as a ruin.

The World Heritage Committee urged the State Party not to carry out any reconstruction work which may adversely affect the Outstanding Universal Value and its authenticity and strongly urged the State Party not to commence any constructions before consideration of the project by the World Heritage Committee.

The mission informed the authorities of the provisions in the *Operational Guidelines* concerning authenticity, in particular that the reconstruction of historic buildings is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances, and only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.

The authorities confirmed that the final decision will only be made after an analysis of reconstruction possibilities for the Cathedral has been completed, and following a review of the project by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, and examination by the World Heritage Committee.

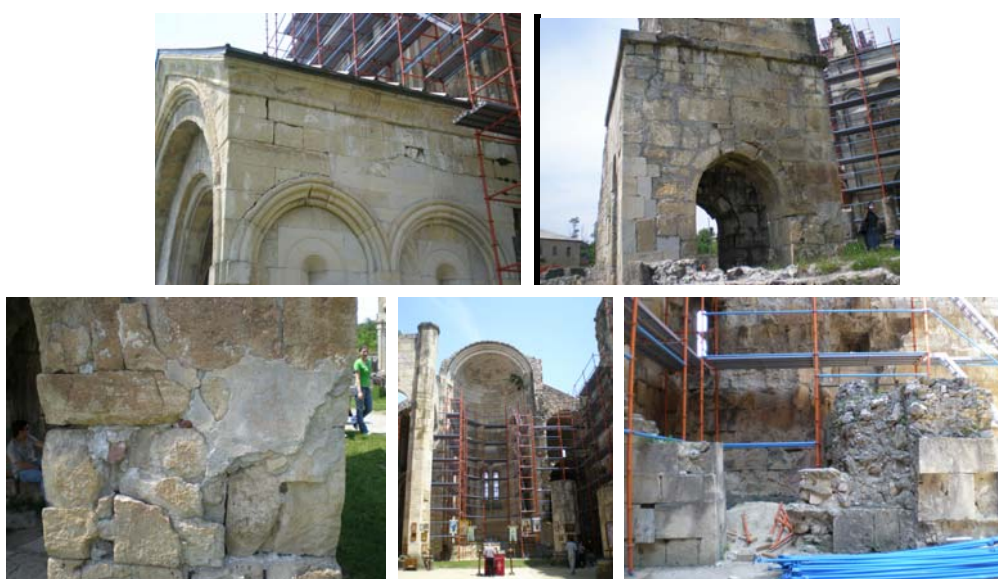
The preparatory activities, including documentation, detailed examination of structures and stability of the walls, evaluation of the general state of conservation and examination of construction materials, as well as reuse of more than 400 authentic stone construction elements inventoried inside and outside the historic building will be finalized by the end of 2008.



Authentic stones outside the Cathedral

Following the evaluation of the state of conservation of this element of the World Heritage property, the mission noted the critical structural stability of the walls and recommended starting immediately, in parallel to any possible decision concerning the project, the preventive conservation works of the Bagrati Cathedral.

The mission strongly recommends that the final decision on the conservation of Bagrati Cathedral should be made after the evaluation of the project by the independent commission of international experts.



Bagrati Cathedral (exterior and interior views)

Gelati Monastery Complex

The mission evaluated the general state of conservation of the main components of the property.



- Virgin Mary Church:

The mission observed the damage of the roof, stone elements and accumulation of humidity in the north-eastern part of the Church and concluded that the exterior of the Cathedral is in need of urgent conservation/restoration work. The Ministry of Culture confirmed that a competition for an architectural conservation project had already been organized. The mission underlined the need for the authorities to provide the project proposal for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

The mission expresses its satisfaction concerning the relatively good condition of the mosaics and mural paintings in the main church of the monastery which have not deteriorated in the last 10 years.

The mission strongly recommended that the authorities prepare, in coordination with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, a long-term programme for the systematic conservation of the mural paintings and mosaics with the involvement and collaboration of the international specialists in this domain.

- St George Church, St. Nicolas Church, Bell Tower

The architectural conservation project for these monuments is part of the above-mentioned competition organized by the Ministry of Culture. The mission expressed its concern about the increasing gravity of the physical situation of these monuments and strongly urged the authorities to undertake the necessary conservation works to ensure the long term survival of these monuments. Special attention should be paid to the mural paintings which urgently need appropriate conservation.

4.2. Review any follow-up measures to previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property and measures which the State Party plans to take to protect the outstanding universal value of the property

In general, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the scope of the problems described, even if the mission noted the progress accomplished by the State Party in attempting to prepare a legal and technical basis to address these problems.

The mission recommended to the authorities that the work programme designed to address the major problems identified and the preparation of the donor's conference for all World Heritage properties in Georgia should be included in the Georgian Cultural Heritage Programme.

20/39

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Recommendations for any additional action to be taken by the State Party, including draft recommendations to the World Heritage Committee

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The mission recommended to the World Heritage Committee the following actions:

THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

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- to note the substantive efforts of the State Party in defining and establishing the Cultural Heritage Programme, including legal assessments and relevant conservation, protection measures;
- to express its serious concern about the privatization processes of land situated in the vicinity of the World Heritage property, and to strongly urge the State Party to immediately halt these processes before the boundary clarification and the preparation of a "Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" defining the World Heritage property's status and its buffer zones are completed;
- to recall its request to the State Party to give highest priority to development of an integrated management plan for the property;
- to invite the State Party to establish a Special State Commission on World Heritage in order to officially share the responsibilities between all relevant State institutions and national, local and religious authorities in ensuring an appropriate legal protection and management of this property;
- to urge the State Party to immediately start the implementation of an integrated multistakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Church in coordination with ICCROM and relevant international experts on stone conservation;
- to express its serious concern about the state of conservation of the archaeological components of the World Heritage property, their progressive deterioration and the abandonment of conservation efforts by the State Party, noting that this loss has a major impact on the outstanding universal value, authenticity and integrity of the property and to further urge the State Party to develop a special programme on protection of all archaeological components;
- to encourage the State Party to undertake a global monitoring of structural stability of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and implement special interventions for conservation of the paintings;
- to request the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2009**, a progress report including all above mentioned documents, as well as the boundaries clarification document, and if relevant, the boundaries modification proposal, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009, **with a view to consider, in the absence of substantial progress, the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

THE BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY

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- to strongly urges the State Party to immediately start preventive conservation work on the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex, as well as to develop, in coordination with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, a long-term programme for the

21/39

systematic conservation of the mural paintings and mosaics with the involvement and collaboration of international specialists in this domain;

- also recalling the earlier discussions among the Advisory Bodies, international experts and the World Heritage Committee, to note the State Party's intention to prepare a new reconstruction project for Bagrati Cathedral in order to recreate its initial religious use and functions, and to underline that in accordance with Paragraph 86 of the Operational Guidelines the reconstruction of historic buildings is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances;
- to request the State Party to provide assurances that no reconstruction work shall be commenced until the State Party has provided complete and detailed documentation concerning this project for review by the World Heritage Committee;
- to also request the State Party to urgently prepare, approve and provide to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, the management plan of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex, including the boundaries clarification document clearly indicating its buffer zones;
- to encourage the State Party to organize awareness-raising campaign for all World Heritage properties in Georgia;
- to invite the State Party to prepare relevant documentation in order to initiate an international donors conference designed to address the major problems identified for all World Heritage properties in Georgia;
- to further request the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2009**, a progress report, including the complete and detailed documentation concerning the new reconstruction project for Bagrati Cathedral, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009.

5.2. Recommendation as to whether the level of threats to the property warrants the property being placed on or removed of the List of World Heritage in Danger

In order to avoid the inscription of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta on the List of World Heritage in Danger, it is recommended that the State Party report by 1 February 2009 on the progress made in:

- | o Urgent development of a "*Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia*" defining the World Heritage property's status, the World Heritage property's strict protected areas and its buffer zones with all necessary restrictive regulations; Formatted: Bullets and Numbering
- o Development of an integrated management plan for the property ;
- o Development of the World Heritage property's strict protected areas and its buffer zones,
- | o Immediate start of the implementation of an integrated multistakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Monastery in coordination with ICCROM and relevant international experts on stone conservation; Deleted: the

- o Development of a global monitoring of structural stability and special intervention for conservation of the paintings of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral;
- o Immediate development of a special Conservation programme on protection of all archaeological components of the World Heritage property.

| o Reinforcement of the institutional coordination by the establishment of a *Special State Commission on World Heritage*.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

**for the joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission
to the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta and
to the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery, Georgia**

2 -10 June 2008

Carry out a joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission, as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 31st session (**Decisions 31 COM 7B.96 and 31 COM 7B.97**), to review the state of conservation of the World Heritage property of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta and the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994;

- 1) Review the overall situation of the properties, including reconstructions, new developments and any impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the properties;
- 2) Evaluate the progress of the implementation of activities concerning the above-mentioned properties within the framework of the Cultural Heritage Protection State Programme (mentioned in the 2008 State Party report);
- 3) Evaluate the progress in the preparation of the integrated management plans for the World Heritage properties of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta and the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery;
- 4) Evaluate the implementation by the State Party of the decision of the World Heritage Committee encouraging the State Party to continue implementation of the integrated multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Monastery and urging the State Party in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop similar work programmes over the next ten years for the other monument complexes of the property;
- 5) Evaluate the implementation by the State Party of the decision of the World Heritage Committee encouraging the State Party to prepare, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS/ICCROM a 5 year work programme designed to address the major problems identified;
- 6) Evaluate any progress made concerning the boundary issues and the buffer zone definition as requested by the World Heritage Committee within the framework of the *Retrospective Inventory Project: Clarification of boundaries of World Heritage properties in Georgia*;
- 7) Prepare a detailed report (in English) by **11 June 2008** on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session in 2008 and submit the report to the World Heritage Centre in electronic form (not exceeding 10 pages (without annexes) according to the enclosed format).

Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau (refer to previous State of Conservation reports etc.)

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THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

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**31st session of the World Heritage Committee,
Christchurch, New Zealand, 23 June – 2 July 2007
Document WHC- 07/31.COM/7B**

Main threats identified in previous reports

- a) Lack of a management mechanism;
- b) Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities;
- c) Need to re-define core and buffer zones;
- d) Loss of authenticity in recent works carried out by the Church.

Current conservation issues

The World Heritage Committee, at its 29th session (Durban, 2005), expressed “serious concern over the state of conservation of this property” and urged the State Party to take urgent and appropriate measures, including implementing the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003, defining appropriate core and buffer zones of the property, and addressing the problem of the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos Palace that affect Mtskheta's outstanding universal value.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Georgia submitted on 12 March 2007 a state of conservation report dated January 2007 which covers a wide range of areas of concern:

The State Party recalls the justification supplied in the nomination document at the time of inscription, however does not provide a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. The State Party also attempts to articulate a Statement of Authenticity/ Integrity but not fully in accordance with the *Operational Guidelines*. In this regard, the State Party notes a significant number of losses of authenticity, including: The Palace of Catholicos-Patriarch Anton II, inappropriate interventions by local clergy at the Svetitskhoveli Complex; erroneous “restoration” works (suspended in 2004), executed at the church of the Jvari Monastery; inappropriate reconstruction works at the six-apse Church in Armaztsikhe-Bagineti.

The State Party also notes a number of monuments which have been “completely destroyed” as a result of the recent work:

- a) some bas-reliefs of the Jvari monastery;
- b) the belfry of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral;
- c) a part of the fortification system in Armaztsikhe-Bagineti.

ICOMOS finds these reports very worrying as in the circumstances the reported loss of authenticity implies a significant potential loss of outstanding universal value.

The State Party reports that in December 2005, the President of Georgia issued a Decree which reorganized the Mtskheta Museum-Reserve (1968) into the *Greater Mtskheta State Archaeological Museum-Reserve (2007)*. The State Party notes that in January 2007, the *Mtskheta Heritage Integrated Management Commission* was instituted within the Municipality to better coordinate at local level the “sustainable and integrated conservation and management of the cultural heritage located on the territory of Mtskheta”. However the State Party notes that no progress has been made in development of a management

25/39

Joint mission report

*Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery
Georgia*

plan for the property and that the 2003 Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan was being used to guide short and long term decision making for the site.

The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS are very concerned that the State Party has not been able to pursue implementation of the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003. ICOMOS believes strongly, given evident different views about development between Church and State, and the already strong reported material losses of authenticity that it is of paramount importance that a management plan involving all stakeholders be developed urgently.

Furthermore, the State Party report provides a detailed monitoring overview of physical conditions of the four major components of the nominated property:

a) Jvari Church: Apart from discussing difficult moisture management situations which threaten the survival of important frescoes, bas reliefs and materials, comments also concern unauthorized construction activities undertaken by the Georgian Church on site. The report notes that though damaging efforts to reconstruct the northern small church have been halted, the church and the parekklesion remain without roofing.

b) Svetitskhoveli Cathedral: The report comments on structural problems at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The seventeenth century Bell Tower has been demolished, and that "absolutely erroneous "reconstruction" works" carried out on the recently discovered 11th century Melchisedec Palace have been very damaging. The State Party repeats comments of 2005 that "it is of paramount importance for the future of the monument that stratigraphic investigations, systematic archaeological excavations, and conservation should be initiated all over the churchyard...".

c) Samtavro Monastery: The report notes that while stabilisation works were completed in 2003, a permanent solution to roofing the Cathedral has not been found and archaeological research had not been completed before the beginning of the "restoration" works inside the Cathedral. The report also notes that the associated belfry is in serious danger of collapse.

d) Armaztsikhe-Bagineti: The report notes that the six-apsed church of the second and third centuries AD, excavated in the 1990s is in an alarming state, and that it has completely lost its authenticity due to priority given reconstruction over conservation of the discovered monument. The report also documents threats to monuments excavated in the 1940s, the roman-type baths, and the fortification system, the major part of which has been irretrievably lost.

As noted in earlier reports, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the severity and scope of the problems described, and the inability of the State Party to address these.

The State Party report further notes that on 27 October 2006, the Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport and the Minister of Economic Development issued a joint Order n° 3/471 – 1-1/1243 *"On the Definition of the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones in Mtskheta"*. This joint Order provides for the establishment of a series of zones to better focus protection in the territory of Mtskheta, including:

a) The Immovable Monuments Protection Zone (IMPZ) to protect both physically and visually the monuments existing in the Mtskheta urban fabric: Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Samtavro Nunnery, Antiochia and Gethsimania Churches;

b) The Construction Regulation Zone (CRZ), a buffer zone, aimed at protecting the integrity of the Mtskheta Historic Centre and its historical landscape;

c) The Archaeological Heritage Protection Zone (AHPZ) including the major archaeological complexes located on the territory of Mtskheta and its surroundings;

26/39

d) The Landscape Protection Zone (LPZ) to protect the “historically formed landscape as an indissoluble natural and cultural phenomenon”.

Following reports in earlier years of serious problems at the Jvari Monastery it is noted that the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia and ICCROM had launched a joint project (2005) aimed at monitoring, documentation and conservation of Jvari Monastery. The report also notes that a second phase of ICCROM's project will address development of a conservation plan for the site, and continue the training of Georgian specialists. Efforts to develop cooperation with the Council of Europe within the framework of the *Kyiv Initiative* Regional Programme, to assist Jvari are also mentioned. Finally, the report a documentation project planned for 2007, with the support of the *Society and Heritage Association* (Georgia) and the World Monuments Fund is indicated. Such an integrated and multi-stakeholder approach to resolve the problems of Jvari Monastery is to be commended.

Decision: 31 COM 7B.96

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-07/31.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **29 COM 7B.64**, adopted at its 29th session (Durban, 2005),
3. Regrets the late submission of the state of conservation report by the State Party but notes substantive efforts in defining and establishing clear zones of protection;
4. Encourages the State Party to continue implementation of the integrated multistakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Monastery and urges the State Party in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop similar work programmes over the next ten years for the other monument complexes the property;
5. Strongly urges the State Party to give highest priority to development of an integrated management plan for the site to be built with the full involvement and collaboration all stakeholders based on the 2003 Masterplan;
6. Requests that the State Party invite a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to assess the state of conservation of the property, including reconstructions, new developments and any impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the property;
7. Also requests the State Party to provide a progress report to the World Heritage Centre on **1 February 2008** for examination by the Committee at its 32nd session in 2008.

29 session of the World Heritage Committee, Durban, South Africa 10-17 July 2005
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Main threat(s) identified in previous report(s):

Lack of a management mechanism; insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities; need to re-define core and buffer zones.

Current conservation issues:

27/39

*Joint mission report
Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery
Georgia*

Following the decision by the Committee, the State Party requested on 17 March 2005 to change the name of the property to the "Historical Monuments of Mtskheta".

The State Party submitted a detailed state of conservation report on 13 February 2005. Following the elaboration in 2003 of the "Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan" with the assistance of UNESCO/UNDP, the State Party recognised the urgent need to prepare a Management Plan for the property. According to the State Party, factors affecting the property include (1) lack of funding, (2) climatic conditions, (3) inappropriate interventions by the Church authorities and (4) absence of an effective management system.

ICOMOS' detailed comments and recommendations on the preparation of the well-structured and detailed report were transmitted to the State Party on 25 April 2005.

Concerning the Jvari Monastery, ICOMOS fully shared the concerns expressed in the State Party report on the state of conservation of both the interior and exterior of the main Church. There are serious problems of stonework maintenance and bas-relief protection. In addition, scaffolding from the earlier restoration work should be removed and a buffer zone must be defined. Therefore, ICOMOS recommended that (1) conservation and partial restoration is needed for the seriously damaged limestone blocks of the external facades. Soot, mildew, and parasites must be removed from certain building stones and capitals; (2) the carved building stones must be carefully removed without delay and taken to a special centre for stone conservation so that the crumbling parts can be strengthened. Thereafter, they should be on display in the Regional Museum. They should be replaced by replicas in accordance with Article 8 of the 1964 Venice Charter. The replicas should be distinguishable from the authentic building stones.

The attempts, now halted, to restore the Northern Church and Parekklesion also pose a significant problem. ICOMOS recommends that (1) specialized cleaning and treatment using herbicide, of the surrounding wall to remove plant growth, (2) repair work to the walling, including careful repair of the construction joints and restoration work in some sections. A protective layer should be put on the upper level, as protection against inclement weather conditions, (3) removal of later, minor constructions or their replacement where necessary (e.g. small wooden gates).

Concerning Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, the State Party reported on the continued and alarming state of the roofing, the bas-reliefs and ornaments of the cupola, and the facades of the monument. Unfortunately, no conservation work has been carried out on the wall paintings inside the Church, which are of exceptional historical and artistic value. They are at grave risk of

further damage and eventual disappearance.

ICOMOS considered that it is of paramount importance for the future of the monument that stratigraphical investigations, systematic archaeological excavations and conservation should be initiated throughout the entire churchyard in advance of 'Territory Maintenance'. Illicit underground construction inside and outside the Monastery grounds and unsupervised excavations carried out by local Church authorities should be prohibited. It is regrettable that the State Party provided no information on new building activities in the buffer zone of the monument, including the surrounding urban architectural ensemble. According to ICOMOS, the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos Palace continue to constitute one of the most difficult problems in preserving Mtskheta's outstanding universal value, since this building continues to be the residence of the Catholicos– Patriarch of Georgia.

ICOMOS regretted that the State Party report made no comment on the condition of the wall paintings inside the *Samtavro Nunnery Church*, which had been seriously damaged by plastering during the Soviet period (see *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003, p.51). The State Party report made no comment on the present condition of the Samtavro burial ground, the largest and one of the most important cemeteries in the Caucasus region.

Short- medium- and long-term recommendations were made in *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003, p.37–40).

ICOMOS shared the views on the existing condition and work carried out at the important Armaztsikhe- Bagineti archaeological property. The proposals in *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003) have not been acted upon in the face of the very serious problems of excavation, conservation, protection and adaptation of this property in the city of Mtskheta. Some 'conservation' methods on the unfired brick walls are open to serious challenge as regards the protection and the underlying layout of the buildings.

Decision 29COM 7B.64

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-05/29.COM/7B.Rev,
2. Recalling its Decision 28 COM 15B.69, adopted at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004),
3. Urges the State Party of Georgia to define core and buffer zones of the property;
4. Expresses its serious concern over the state of conservation of this property and urges the State Party to take urgent and appropriate measures;
5. Encourages the State Party to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003;
6. Recalls the importance of cooperation between the State Party and stakeholders for the conservation of the property.
7. Requests the State Party to solve the problem of the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos Palace that strongly affects Mtskheta's outstanding universal value.
8. Requests the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre with an updated report by 1 February 2007 for examination by the Committee at its 31st session (2007).

29COM 8B.1 - Changes to Names of Properties (Historical Monuments of Mtskheta)

At the request of the Georgian authorities the Committee is asked to approve a change to the English and French names of the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994.

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-05/29.COM/8B,
2. Approves the proposed name change to the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (Georgia) as proposed by the Georgian authorities. The name of the property becomes Historical Monuments of Mtskheta in English and Monuments historiques de Mtskheta in French.

Conservation issues:

At the request of the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee, a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission was undertaken from 8 to 16 November 2003.

Despite the political situation in Georgia at that time, which made it difficult to organise meetings with the relevant authorities, the mission evaluated the state of conservation of the property, the management of the World Heritage site and consulted local stakeholders on how best to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003.

Subsequently, the Georgian authorities provided a state of conservation report on 25 February 2004, which addresses a number of conservation issues.

The Church of Georgia has constructed new buildings in the vicinity of the Cathedral of Sveti Tskhoveli, which in the opinion of the mission affects the character of the World Heritage site. While the basilica of the Cathedral is in a good condition, the inappropriate method used for the restoration of mural paintings is of particular concern as the mission observed surface abrasion and general deterioration. The mission noted further conservation problems that include damages on the defence wall and uneven ground level as well as an underground concrete structure outside the defence wall of the Cathedral. The Georgian Church constructed a bishop palace within the ground, in view to demolish it later when another building is constructed outside the wall of the Cathedral. The State Party further mentioned in its report that the Church has made some inappropriate interventions for the conservation of the property. The exterior of the Samtavro Monastic Complex is in a good condition but the mission could not obtain permission to examine the interior of the building. The state of conservation of Jvari is favourable, except it is necessary to remove the scaffolding from the earlier restoration work and to define a buffer zone for the property. The State Party stated in its report that inappropriate material was used to restore the small church of the Jvari Monastery.

The mission considers that the Master Plan for the World Heritage property needs to be implemented with a more active involvement of the local, regional and national authorities as well as the Church. The translation of the Master Plan into Georgian would further facilitate this process. Moreover, future developments should take into account the vision provided in the Master Plan and to keep the integrity of the World Heritage property by, for example, respecting the existing architectural styles and using local material. The mission explored different ways in which the Master Plan could be supported by different international and national organisations including the World Bank, Soros Foundation and UNDP.

The ICOMOS-UNESCO mission highlights an urgent need to clarify the extent of a core zone and to define buffer zones as appropriate. At the time of the inscription in 1994, ICOMOS evaluated the outstanding universal value of only three churches. The World Heritage Committee at its 18th session in 1994, therefore, suggested to the State Party to change the name of the property to the "Historic Churches of Mtskheta" but this has never been taken up. The Georgian authorities stated in their state of conservation report that they wish to extend the core zone of the property to include an area as defined by a triangle of the churches of Jvari, Samtavro and Armatsikhe. The mission of November 2003 supports the view taken by the State Party in order to ensure landscape integrity, while recognising potential problems in controlling future developments in the enlarged area. In accordance with the Constitutional Agreement with the State, the Georgian Orthodox Church owns all ecclesiastic buildings in Georgia. The report by the State Party confirmed the view of the mission that the interventions made by the Georgian Church for the conservation of the property are often inappropriate and the country lacks an overall process to manage urban development and other conservation issues at the national and local level.

Decision 28 COM 15B.69

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Noting the outcome of the joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property,
2. Expresses its serious concerns for the lack of management mechanism for the property as well as insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities in safeguarding the outstanding universal value of the property;
3. Urges the State Party to change the name of the property to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta" as suggested by the World Heritage Committee at its 19th session in 1994, following the original ICOMOS evaluation at the time of the inscription that refers to the Churches of Jvari, Samtavro and Armatsikhe as the components of the property, and to prepare a detailed map indicating their core and buffer zones;
4. Encourages the State Party to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003;
5. Requests the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre an updated report by 1 February 2005 so that the World Heritage Committee could examine the state of conservation of the property at its 29th session in 2005.

**27 session of the World Heritage Committee,
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII
30 June – 5 July 2003**

The World Heritage Committee strongly urged the State Party of Georgia to provide, before 1 September 2002, a report on the on-going constructions and degradations at the site and requested that the authorities invite a UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to the site. To date no report has been received and pending the official invitation by the authorities, the experts identified by ICOMOS and the Centre were not able to undertake this mission.

Decision 27 COM 7 (b) 62

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Recalling the decision taken at the 26th session of the Committee in 2002 (**26 COM 21 (b) 46**), to carry out a mission to the property and for a report to be provided by the State Party,
2. Reminds the State Party of its responsibilities as described in Article 6 of the *World Heritage Convention* to ensure the preservation and conservation of World Heritage properties;
3. Urgently requests the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the State Party to work closely together to ensure timely organisation of a joint mission and for a detailed report to be completed in order that the World Heritage Committee can examine the state of conservation of the property at its 28th session in 2004.

31/39

*Joint mission report
Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery
Georgia*

**26 session of the World Heritage Committee,
Budapest, Hungary, 24 - 29 June 2002**
25th extraordinary session of the Bureau (paragraph III. 159-160)

International assistance:

1999 Technical cooperation - US\$ 19,000 for the preparation of the heritage and tourism master plan for Mtskheta; 1999 Preparatory assistance - US\$ 20,000 for the preparation of the nomination dossiers for Vardizia- Khertvisi Historical Area and Tbilissi Historic District.

Main issues: The degradation and construction projects at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral are a cause for concern. The Bureau requested a report on the state of conservation and up-to-date information on all the restoration and construction projects at the site.

New information:

At the time of the preparation of this document no report from the authorities had been received.

Action required: The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

"The Committee strongly urges the State Party of Georgia to provide a report before the 1 September 2002 on the ongoing constructions and degradations at the site, and requests the Government authorities to ensure that all these works are halted and that no further restoration works or constructions in close proximity to the Cathedral be undertaken. It requests that the authorities invite an UNESCO-ICOMOS to the site in the near future and that a report be presented to the 27th session of the Bureau in April 2003."

Decision 26 COM 21 (b) 46

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Strongly urges the State Party of Georgia to provide before the 1 September 2002, a report on the on-going constructions and degradations at the site;
2. Requests the Government authorities to ensure that all these works are halted and that no further restoration works or constructions in close proximity to the Cathedral be undertaken;
3. Requests that the authorities invite an UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to the site in the near future and that a report be presented for examination at its 27th session in June/July 2003.

**23rd session of the World Heritage Committee,
Marrakesh, Morocco, 29 November - 4 December 1999**

City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (Georgia)

From 1996 to 1999 an amount of US\$ 36,800 was made available under technical co-operation for expert services on a management and tourism policy. A preliminary study for a Master Plan for the heritage and tourist policy for the World Heritage site was prepared. In September 1999, the major elements of this study were presented during a World Heritage Centre mission to potential donor institutions in the form of "Terms of Reference for 9 Actions". As a result, a project is being prepared with UNDP (to be financed by

32/39

Joint mission report

*Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery
Georgia*

UNDP and the World Heritage Fund) for the development of a Heritage and Tourism Master Plan.

The mission team particularly noted the critical conditions of two archaeological sites: the Armaztsikhe and the Samtavros Veli sites. Furthermore, the mission took note of a plan to build a new bell tower within the enclosure of the cathedral.

The Observer of Germany inquired about the results of the previous assistance and pointed out that urgent interventions and rehabilitation works are needed in the site. These issues should be taken into account by the Committee when examining a request for technical co-operation for the preparation of the Master Plan.

The Bureau decided to transmit the report to the Committee for examination and recommended the following for adoption:

"The Committee welcomes the initiative of the Government of Georgia and the Mtskheta Foundation to develop a Heritage and Tourism Master Plan for the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta. It expresses its full support for this initiative that will provide the appropriate framework for a coherent set of actions to be financed by different sources and donor institutions. The Committee recognizes that on the middle and long-term major investments will be required for the actual implementation of the Master Plan and calls upon States Parties, international institutions and organizations to collaborate in this effort.

The Committee urges the Government of Georgia to take immediate measures for the protection of the Armaztsikhe archaeological site and for the recuperation of the total area of the Samtavros Veli Necropolis site. It requests the Georgian authorities to provide the plans for the bell tower at the cathedral for further study by ICOMOS."

World Heritage Committee XVIII session / Phuket, Thailand / December 1994
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The City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta

The Committee, in inscribing this property on the World Heritage List, suggested to the State Party to change the name to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta".

Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau (refer to previous State of Conservation reports etc.)

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THE BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY

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**31st session of the World Heritage Committee,
Christchurch, New Zealand, 23 June – 2 July 2007
Document WHC- 07/31.COM/7B**

Main threats identified in previous reports

- a) General need for interior and exterior conservation work on the monuments;
- b) Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities;
- c) Lack of co-ordinated management system;
- d) Major reconstruction of the structure of Bagrati Cathedral.

Current conservation issues

The World Heritage Committee at its 29th session (Durban, 2005) encouraged the State Party to take appropriate measures, including seeking of funds, to address conservation issues identified in the state of conservation report.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Georgia submitted a report on 12 March 2007 to the World Heritage Centre, dated January 2007. This report provides a comprehensive overview of all the issues relevant to the long term conservation of the property. This detailed report includes a proposal by the State Party for a new statement of significance, a statement of authenticity/integrity, a description of the situation for management, detailed monitoring reports concerning the physical condition of frescoes and materials within the two ensembles, and recently completed conservation work and studies addressing some of the problems identified.

More specifically, the report proposes a new approach to the justification of the property, including: nomination under two additional criteria, (i) and (ii), but without justification as well as a statement of authenticity/integrity not fully in compliance with the *Operational Guidelines*.

Concerning the lack of a management plan for the two properties, unresolved management conflict between Church and State and the physical state of conservation of the two ensembles the report provides observations included already its report of January 2005. The Committee's request (**29 COM 7B.75**) is not addressed in the State Party report. Indeed, all of the problems described at the time appear still in place, and in most cases worsened by the passage of time without positive treatment.

The current report also notes that the major reconstruction project for the structure of the Bagrati Cathedral, first questioned at the 28th session of the Committee (Suzhou, 2004), is no longer being considered.

The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS express their concern about the increasing gravity of the physical situation described of the two ensembles, the continuing inability of the State Party to provide the necessary management, and institutional conditions necessary to ensure the long-term survival of these monuments, and for the apparent failure to secure the necessary financial support to address previously defined problems.

Decision: 31 COM 7B.97

The World Heritage Committee,

34/39

1. Having examined Document WHC-07/31.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **29 COM 7B.75**, adopted at its 29th session (Durban, 2005),
3. Regrets the late submission of the state of conservation report but notes the efforts of the State Party in reviewing the values, integrity and authenticity of the property;
4. Expresses serious concern about the continuing urgency of the problems described by the State Party report, and its inability to respond to these issues with appropriate managerial, institutional and financial measures;
5. Encourages the State Party to prepare, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS/ICCROM a 5 year work programme designed to address the major problems identified, for presentation to potential donors;
6. Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission to assess the state of conservation of the property;
7. Strongly urges the State Party to initiate preparation of an integrated management plan for the World Heritage property, with the assistance of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
8. Also requests the State Party to provide a progress report to the World Heritage Centre by **1 February 2008** for examination by the Committee at its 32nd session in 2008.

**29 session of the World Heritage Committee,
Durban, South Africa
10-17 July 2005**

Main threat(s) identified in previous report(s):

Major reconstruction of the structure of Bagrati Cathedral; general need for interior and exterior conservation work of the monuments; insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities.

Current conservation issues:

The State Party submitted a state of conservation report on 1 February 2005 which outlined in great detail the current condition of each of the monuments that constitute the World Heritage property.

No conservation or consolidation works have been carried out over the recent decade for Bagrati Cathedral, and the lack of care has worsened its physical state. In 2003, the Centre for the Reconstruction of the Architectural Heritage produced the 'Concept of Scientific Protection of Bagrati Cathedral' with financial assistance from UNESCO, but there is no Management Plan. Factors affecting the property include harsh climatic conditions, an ineffective management system, lack of financial subsidies, and interventions by the clergy. In the context of 'The Concept of Scientific Protection of Bagrati Cathedral,' the following studies have been carried out: geological and seismic research; analysis of the physical state of the Cathedral; research into the building materials; bibliographical studies; archaeological research; analysis of the methodology of reconstruction; and the concept of protection. The structurally unstable parts of the monument have been recorded, as well as the preserved fragments of wall paintings.

With regard to the Gelati Monastery, the report stated that two interventions made by the local clergy have affected the appearance of the observatory building and St. Nicolas

35/39

*Joint mission report
Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery
Georgia*

Church, and that no Management Plan existed. Factors affecting the property include harsh climatic conditions, an ineffective management system, the lack of financial subsidies, and interventions by the clergy. In addition, diagnostic research of the wall paintings of the Virgin Mary Church was carried out by the Cultural and Art Fund of Georgia. This included the study of the archives, the condition of the frescoes, geological research of the area, research of the moisture content, and laboratory research (chemical and biological analysis).

The condition of the basement, the walls, floors, and plaster was analysed. The condition of the fence needs attention.

The state of conservation report submitted by the State Party made no specific mention of the major reconstruction project for the structure of the Bagrati Cathedral discussed during the previous session of the World Heritage Committee. The World Heritage Centre is in contact with the State Party to seek clarification.

This state of conservation report shows that the State Party is well aware of the condition of these two World Heritage properties. However, no long-term, effective steps have been undertaken by the Georgian conservation services to confront the very serious problems of these monuments. There are no Management Plans for the Bagrati and Gelati ensembles, and the UNESCO and UNDP-SPPD Heritage and Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta has not yet been translated into Georgian. With regard to problems of funding, the State Party should be encouraged actively to undertake initiatives with international donor institutions in order to fulfil the highest priority need for the protection and conservation of the monuments.

Serious problems exist stemming from the current legal framework for monuments in Georgia, and particularly those relating to the ownership and management of religious monuments. To this is added the lack of strong and effective control of monuments and archaeological properties at all administrative levels. It is clear, however, that although ownership of ecclesiastical monuments in Georgia is constitutionally vested in the Georgian Orthodox Church, the management of these monuments is the responsibility of the State. In consequence, the state authorities should accept permanent responsibility for the preservation and protection of religious monuments as well as historical buildings and archaeological properties, and act in a timely manner to prevent any destructive intervention and reconstruction activity.

Decision: 29 COM 7B.75

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document **WHC-05/29.COM/7B.Rev**,
2. Recalling its Decision **28 COM 15B.93**, adopted at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004),
3. Encourages the State Party of Georgia to take appropriate measures, including seeking of funds, to address conservation issues identified in the state of conservation report;
4. Requests the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre by **1 February 2007** with an updated report for examination by the Committee at its 31st session (2007).

28 session of the World Heritage Committee, Durban, South Africa 10-17 July 2005

Conservation issues:

36/39

*Joint mission report
Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery
Georgia*

During a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (Georgia) from 8 to 16 November 2003, observations were also made on the state of conservation of Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery. The mission observed that the exterior of the buildings of Gelati Monastery is in good condition. The windows, however, need to be conserved to keep out the wind and rainwater as damages have been caused to the mural paintings particularly on the southern wall. In Bagrati Cathedral scaffolding from the previous conservation work still stands against the wall of the fortress, and open trenches indicate that archaeological excavation have been left incomplete. Conservation work on the chapel in the fortress and the walls of the cathedral also need to be concluded. The authorities of Georgia intend to undertake a major reconstruction of the structure, either by using artificial stones to recreate the original form of the building or to use glazed steel to build a transparent dome, which can be illuminated. ICOMOS, however, took a view that any reconstruction must be carried out in keeping with the outstanding universal value of the property and its authenticity and therefore it would be more appropriate to retain the site as a ruin.

Decision 28 COM 15B.87

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Acknowledging the outcomes of the joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property,
2. Takes note with concern of the conservation problems affecting the property and encourages the State Party to respond to them taking into account the recommendations made by the mission;
3. Urges the State Party not to carry out any reconstruction work which may adversely affect the outstanding universal value and its authenticity and strongly urges the State Party not to commence any constructions before consideration of the project by the Committee;
4. Requests the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre an updated report by 1 February 2005 so that the World Heritage Committee may examine the state of conservation of the property at its 29th session in 2005.

World Heritage Committee XVIII session / Phuket, Thailand / December 1994
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Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery

The Committee inscribed this property on the World Heritage List and requested the ICOMOS mission evaluation report to be transmitted to the State Party.

COMPOSITION OF MISSION TEAM

The mission was conducted by Ms Anna Sidorenko-Dulom, Europe and North America Section, UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Professor Dr. Elka Bakalova, *Membre correspondant de l'Academie bulgare des Sciences*, ICOMOS representative.

MISSION PROGRAMME

Monday, 2 June 2008

Arrival of ICOMOS representative in Tbilisi and accommodation

Tuesday, 3 June 2008

Arrival of WHC representative in Tbilisi and accommodation

1. WHC/ICOMOS working meeting
2. Presentation of the Bagrati Cathedral reconstruction project preparatory works by the architect of the Cultural Heritage Restoration Centre (NGO)
1. Meeting with the Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia Dr Nicoloz Vacheishvili, Director of the Cultural Heritage Department Ms Leila Tumanishvili, Ms Ketikandelaki, Secretary-General of the Georgian National Commission for UNESCO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and the Chair of the Georgian National World Heritage Committee Mr Irakli Metreveli
3. First meeting with specialists of the Georgian National World Heritage Committee, discussion on the state of conservation of the Georgian World Heritage properties, Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport

Dinner offered by the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia.

Wednesday, 4 June 2008

2. Meeting with the members of the Cultural Heritage Commission of the Georgian Orthodox Church Patriarchate
3. Audience with His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II
4. Visit to the Jvari Monastery, Mtskheta
5. Meeting with the representatives of the Municipality of Mtskheta

Thursday, 5 June 2008

1. Meeting with the Director of the Greater Mtskheta Archaeological Museum-Reserve Mr Temur Bibiluri

38/39

2. Visit to the Samtavro, Mtskheta
3. Visit to the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Mtskheta
4. Working meeting at the Direction of the Greater Mtskheta Archaeological Museum-Reserve
5. Visit of the archaeological sites

Friday, 6 June 2008

Working day with specialists of the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport / Presentation of the inventory, documentation and protection zones established for the Georgian World Heritage properties, Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport

Saturday, 7 June 2008

1. Departure from Tbilisi to Kutaisi
2. Visit to the Bagrati Cathedral

Sunday, 8 June 2008

1. Visit to the Gelati Monastery
2. Return to Tbilisi

Monday, 9 June 2008

1. Working meetings with specialists of the Ministry of Culture
2. Meeting with Dr Irakli Simonia, Association AstroarchaeoCaucasus
3. Debriefing meeting with the Deputy Minister of Culture
4. WHC/ICOMOS working meeting / Preparation of a joint mission report

Tuesday, 10 June 2008

Departure to Paris

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