



*Permanent Delegation of the Islamic Republic
of Afghanistan to UNESCO and ISESCO*

9th Expert Working Group Meeting for the Preservation of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage Property, Afghanistan

UNESCO Headquarters (3 and 4 March 2011, Room VI)

Recommendations

Introductory Remarks:

March 2011 marked the tenth anniversary of the devastating destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues and other invaluable cultural objects in Afghanistan. On this occasion, UNESCO, in close cooperation with the Afghan authorities, organized the 9th Expert Working Group Meeting at its Headquarters on the 3rd and 4th of March 2011. The aim of the Expert Working Group is to advise UNESCO and the Afghanistan authorities on issues related to the conservation of the Bamiyan World Heritage property by reviewing and assessing ongoing activities in Bamiyan, as well as identifying needs and opportunities for future initiatives. The Expert Working Group Meeting also aims to enhance the coordination of international efforts for the sustainable management and development of the Bamiyan site.

The participants at this meeting note the importance of the participation of the Afghan Government representatives and congratulate UNESCO and the Afghan authorities for facilitating their presence at the current Working Group Meeting. The participants would also like to sincerely thank UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Permanent Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to UNESCO & ISESCO for hosting the meeting and providing all the necessary logistical support.

Within the framework of the One UN initiative, the Bamiyan Expert Working Group recognises that the current initiatives for the conservation and sustainable management of the World Heritage properties of Bamiyan are fully in line with the UNDAF (United Nations Assistance Development Framework) and the Afghan National Development Strategy. They consider that the conservation of this outstanding heritage site contributes to promoting peace and fostering sustainable development, in particular for the people of Bamiyan, and in Afghanistan as a whole, by demonstrating the possibility of building sustainable communities by fostering cultural diversity and an appropriate use of the natural and cultural environment.

An important outcome of the preceding 8th Bamiyan Expert Working Group meeting (Munich, March 2010) was the preliminary discussion on possible long-term solutions for the conservation, presentation and interpretation of the Buddha niches and fragments of the statues following their structural stabilization.

The participants of the 9th Expert Working Group,

Proposals for remedial measures and the future presentation of the two Buddha niches

1. Examined the initial proposals of four international teams for remedial measures and the future presentation of the two Buddha niches (Prof. A. Bruno/Italy, Hon. President, Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation (RLICC) of Leuven University; Prof. M. Jansen, Aachen University, Germany; Prof. K. Maeda, Visiting Researcher, Japan Centre for International Co-operation in Conservation, NRICP, Tokyo, Japan and the team of Prof. Emmerling, Munich Technical University and Prof. M. Petzet, President ICOMOS, Germany).
2. Decided that in view of the available scientific data and estimated financial requirement, a total reconstruction of either of the Buddha sculptures cannot be considered at the present time.
3. Recommend that the larger western niche be consolidated and left empty as a testimony to the tragic act of destruction and that a feasibility study be undertaken to determine whether or not a partial reassembling of fragments of the eastern Buddha could be an option in the coming years which could be further examined by the Expert Working Group, the International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage, as well as by the World Heritage Committee before final submission to the Afghan authorities for consideration.
4. Recommend that a Central Museum be constructed in Bamiyan and smaller site museums at the eight specific sites that compose the World Heritage property and the geo-cultural features of the Bamiyan province; store the fragments collected as well as any other materials and findings from conservation works and archaeological excavations and house a conservation laboratory.
5. Confirm that the work needs to be pursued to safeguard and preserve the entire cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley with due regard to all the archaeological and architectural components necessary for the future development of Bamiyan.
6. Recommend that a Bamiyan Cultural Landscape management plan needs to be developed and finalized in close collaboration with the local authorities and should serve as a point of reference for all future interventions.

Review of the four components of the Desired State of Conservation

Ensuring site security

7. Note the significant progress made in ensuring the safety of the World Heritage property by completing the demining of the Bamiyan Valley, which is a precondition for any conservation and presentation work, and recognize the efforts of UNESCO and the Ministry of Information and Culture, in cooperation with UNMAS, MACCA and local partners to achieve this important result;
8. Recommend, however, for the safety of all concerned, that any new archaeological excavations be carried out with the support of a demining team in the World Heritage areas cleared in 2008-2009 (Shar-i-Zohak, Shar-i-Gholgholah, Top of Buddha Cliffs);
9. Recommend the zoning of the sites as per the Master Plan and UNESCO recommendations for de-mining, the cataloguing of the sites/monuments/objects with an assessment of their significance and damage, the undertaking of a comparative analysis between the previously collected data and current data, providing safe pathways and trails for visitors and communities, prioritizing the conservation and restoration of the sites/monuments and objects and preparing a risk management plan for the site, and last but not the least providing on-site training to de-mining teams regarding intervention in archaeological / historical areas;

10. Note the appointment of trained guards and an archaeological police force on site to fight against illicit excavations and looting on the site and urge the local and national authorities to increase the size of this force and to provide a minimum of facilities such as communication devices and use of existing local buildings;
11. Advocate public awareness and education programs in order to address the issue of the illicit traffic of antiquities;

Safeguarding the remains of the Buddhas and their niches

12. Note with satisfaction the work undertaken by ICOMOS Germany to achieve the recommendations of the previous 8th Expert Group Meeting with regards to the stabilization of the rear wall of the Eastern Buddha and the safety of the path leading to the top of the eastern Buddha niche, making it possible to have visitors back on site. Many major cracks and loose hanging rocks in this niche have been consolidated with back filling, grouting, drilling and setting anchors; the more minor cracks received subtle conservation treatment with injection of materials. A long vertical crack on the side of the plait was stabilized. For safety of visitors to the site, various protective elements have been placed on the stairways and on other parapets, certain steps have been rebuilt and broken doors replaced with identically made new doors using modern timber.
13. Given the successful completion of the consolidation of the Eastern Buddha, recommend that the repairs therein be monitored closely and that its scaffolding be dismantled and transferred to the Western Buddha with the purpose of starting the latter's consolidation work at the earliest. The experts called for an urgent intervention particularly with regards to the entrance to the head of the western niche, containing a crack subject to a constant seismic vibration and therefore in danger of an imminent collapse.
14. Recommend that special attention be paid to the sub-surface area in front of the western niche which may contain archaeological remains. Specific initiatives should be undertaken in order to contain and control the erosion and alluvial flooding in between and in front of the niches. Local capacities for the management of the necessary geological surveys should be developed at the Bamiyan University.

Adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings

15. Note the severe damages incurred on the murals in the Bamiyan caves due to adverse environmental conditions but also as a result of vandalism acts before and after 2000.
16. Note with satisfaction the conservation strategies adopted by NRICP, Tokyo, Japan, in 2010 which include keeping Afghanistan-ASI's gypsum edging; securing the current state of the murals with minimum intervention; quick and simple treatment; no coloring on the edges, injecting mortar into cracks etc.
17. Recommend that local conservation technicians be trained with conservators from Kabul
18. Urge for the implementation of sustainability activities such as site monitoring and maintenance, construction of the Bamiyan museum, creation of tourist routes, cave key management and security, installation of secured staircases and banisters in the caves, sign boards and comprehensive site interpretation.
19. Recommend the identification and execution of emergency conservation actions for mural paintings and physical remains (consolidation, drainage, repair) for these World Heritage areas; as well as the archaeological investigation, cleaning, drainage, repairing and protection be carried out for these World Heritage areas (notably for Shar-i-Zohak, Shar-i-Gholghola, Qal'a-i-Kaphari, Kakrak and Foladi).
20. Note with satisfaction, the work accomplished by the French archaeological mission in Bamiyan (French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs) under Professor Tarzi's guidance to uncover, preserve and restore the archaeological remains on the MO (Oriental Monastery)

and MR (Royal Monastery) sites and their transformation into a site Museum (in situ Museum);

21. Encourage the Afghan authorities to secure lands containing archaeological remains in order to ensure their preservation

Implementation of the Management Plan and Cultural Master Plan (the protective zoning plan)

22. Note the Cultural Master Plan prepared jointly by Aachen University experts and the local Bamiyan Authorities, the objectives defined by the Bamiyan Expert Working Group and duly considering the Afghan National Development Strategy as well as the on-site conditions;
23. Recommend however that an archaeological sites map be established and cross-read with the Cultural Master Plan in order to avoid damage to potentially imbedded archaeological remains.
24. Laud the achievements of the local authorities over the last 10 years in rendering the Bamiyan province among the safest in Afghanistan despite the overall security situation in the country. Bamiyan holds the highest school enrolment rate for girls and the highest women's participation in elections in Afghanistan and has registered a net increase in cultural tourism;
25. Recommend to finalise the Management plan for Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage Property that this Management and Cultural Master Plan now be established and shared with all the national and international actors as a reference for the overall development strategy for the valley;
26. Urge the local and national authorities to continue coordination of efforts to safeguard and preserve the entire Bamiyan cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley with due regard to all its archaeological and architectural components: Enforcement of building codes and controls on development in the buffer zones and core zones of the World Heritage areas and other areas protected under the Afghan Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties 2004;
27. Recommend the completion of detailed ground surveys and site documentation of the remaining World Heritage areas including archaeological prospection for determining their possible extension (Kakrak, Gholghola, Foladi, Qula-e Kaphari);
28. Urge to reinforce capacity building within the Provincial Government and the University of Bamiyan through the organization of training workshops (on Globe Information Systems, Management, Tourism and Archaeology) in Bamiyan and in partnerships with universities abroad, if appropriate;
29. Recommend the creation of a Quality Control Commission for development projects within area determined by the Cultural Master Plan with a permanent presence of UNESCO experts, members of the Afghan Government and other International Organisations working in the area.

Other recommendations:

30. Taking note of the text of the Kabul Charter for Sustainable Heritage Development,¹ which outlines a set of principles and guidelines for an integrated and sustainable heritage development, highlighting the importance of community engagement, cultural diversity, cultural mapping and sustainable heritage tourism, adopt this as the guiding principles for the formulation of Phase IV of the Japan FIT project for Bamiyan and its implementation
31. Encourage the Afghan authorities to continue inter-ministerial co-ordination as well as discussion and information-sharing between provincial and national authorities for the benefit of all tangible and intangible heritage in Afghanistan;

¹ *Kabul Charter for Sustainable Heritage Development: Bringing Afghan People and Their Heritage Together*, Kabul, October 18-21, 2010

32. Underline the necessary interconnection between all ongoing and future initiatives in Bamiyan and therefore the need to ensure coordination among international experts, agencies and relevant Afghan Authorities at all levels.
33. Underline the importance of clear information to local people and the involvement of the latter with regards to all decisions and activities on the site in order to ensure their appropriation of the future developments on the existing cultural landscape.
34. Recommend that documentation related to the above mentioned scientific activities undertaken on site should be made available to the Afghan Authorities and to UNESCO for future utilization and that it should be translated into the main Afghan languages.
35. Consider that the photo record and documentation as well as all documentation from the archaeological excavations of Bamiyan by various experts and institutions should be deposited in the archives of the MoIC for future generations;
36. Encourage that detailed proposals for any new projects should be prepared in advance of the meeting by their authors for review by experts and discussion at the Expert Working Group meeting. No projects should be implemented unless they have been discussed by the Expert Working Group and cleared by the Afghan authorities. Major interventions, moreover, should be submitted to the World Heritage Committee according to paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
37. Note that the Afghan authorities, together with its international implementing partners, proposed that the Desired State of Conservation for the property should be attained by 2013 in view of its potential removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger in that year.
38. Participants also recognize the efforts made to improve the State of Conservation of the property and conclude that Bamiyan site can be a successful story for heritage conservation and sustainable development.
39. Participants at the meetings also concluded that with the tragedy of the destruction now behind us, the Bamiyan Valley - with its unique history, tangible and intangible cultural heritage and local communities - constitutes a fertile environment for learning how to transform a destructive act into an opportunity to reinforce tolerance, peace and development through culture for future generations.