



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



• Cultural Landscape and
• Archaeological Remains of
• the Bamiyan Valley
• inscribed on the World
• Heritage List in 2003



*Ministry of Information and Culture
of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*

**11th Expert Working Group Meeting for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Landscape and
Archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage Property, Afghanistan
Aachen University, Aachen, Germany (10-11 December 2012)**

Recommendations

Introductory Remarks:

Since the destruction of the Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan in March 2001, the international community has joined together to safeguard the remains of this invaluable Afghan heritage. In 2003, the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley was inscribed on the World Heritage List and simultaneously placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Since then, thanks to generous grants through the UNESCO - Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of World Cultural Heritage, UNESCO has completed three phases of the major project for the Preservation of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley, and is now working on the fourth phase. Substantial progress has been made in relation to the state of conservation of the Bamiyan site, the long-term consolidation of the site, the increase in national capacities in the conservation of cultural heritage and the creation of a basis for sustainable development and cultural tourism in Bamiyan. The World Heritage Committee adopted several benchmarks (criteria for a “Desired State of Conservation”), which, if met, will indicate that the Bamiyan Valley no longer faces immediate threats to its conservation and can be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger. These include: 1) ensuring site security; 2) ensuring the structural stability of the two standing Giant Buddha niches; 3) adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings; and, 4) implementation of the Management Plan and Cultural Master Plan (the protective zoning plan).

The World Heritage Committee, in its Decision 36 COM 7A.26, taken at its 36th session (Saint Petersburg, 2012) for the Cultural landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley, reiterates its request to the Afghanistan authorities, when considering options for the treatment of the Buddha niches, to ensure that proposals are based on feasibility studies which include:

- a) An overall approach to conservation and presentation of the property,
- b) An appropriate conservation philosophy based on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,
- c) Technical and financial possibilities for the implementation of the project proposals.

The Afghanistan authorities (led by H.E. Dr Sayed Makhdoum Raheen, Minister of Information and Culture of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan) participated actively in the 11th Bamiyan Expert Working Group meeting (Aachen, Germany, 10-11 December 2012). During this meeting, the Afghan authorities requested the Expert Working Group Meeting to assist them particularly on the following four points:

1. At least partial-reconstruction of one Buddha niche (Eastern Buddha, small Buddha of 38 meters).
2. Bamiyan Museum for Peace,
3. Urgent intervention and consolidation of the large Western Buddha niche rear wall,
4. Achieving the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger and the preservation of all the related monuments of Bamiyan Cultural Landscape as well as the cliff niches.

The participants of the 11th Expert Working Group meeting, building from the 10th Expert Working Group meeting:

Culture and Development and General issues

1. Took note of the text of the *Kabul Charter for Sustainable Heritage Development*,¹ which outlines a set of principles and guidelines for integrated and sustainable heritage development, highlighting the importance of community engagement, cultural diversity, cultural mapping and sustainable heritage tourism, adopted this as the guiding principles for the formulation of Phase IV of the Japan FIT project for Bamiyan and its implementation, which should bring forward a holistic approach to culture in development and to promoting a culture of peace in Afghanistan;
2. Recommended a harmonization of conservation and development approaches to heritage management;
3. Recommended to further promote the preservation and revitalization of the cultural landscape through activities such as the 2011-2012 SDC /UNESCO Kabul Office project to address conservation issues in living landscapes;
4. Took note of the recently-approved UNESCO-Italy FIT project for “Heritage Conservation, Development and Coordination Project for Afghanistan” to promote a positive public discourse through awareness-raising activities focusing on social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and peace through the preservation of cultural heritage, to be demonstrated through the conservation and presentation of part of the Bamiyan World Heritage Property (Shar-i-Gholgholah) to the general public;
5. Took note of the theme of the World Heritage Convention’s 40th anniversary “*World Heritage Convention and Sustainable Development: The Role of Local Communities*” and the *Kyoto Vision*,² launched at the end of the closing ceremony of the World Heritage Convention’s 40th anniversary celebration in Kyoto, Japan on 8 November 2012, which highlighted the importance of a people-centred approach to the conservation of World Heritage as the best way to ensure the long-term protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites, concluding with a call for action appealing to the international community to ensure the “effective involvement of local communities,

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

² *World Heritage Convention’s 40th anniversary celebration concluded and launched Kyoto Vision*, Kyoto, Japan, 8 November 2012

indigenous peoples, experts and youth” in all aspects of World Heritage conservation, from the nomination of the site to long-term conservation practice;

6. Took note that the 11th Expert Working Group meeting which brought together approximately 45 Afghan authorities and international experts actively involved in the safeguarding of this site, together with the representatives of donor institutions and implementing agencies, including UNESCO, ICOMOS-Germany, SPRA (Italian Institute for Protection and Environmental Research), National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (NRICP) Tokyo and Nara, RWTH Aachen University, and especially the representative of the Government of Japan who has contributed to the implementation of the activities;
7. Regretted that in spite of tremendous efforts made by the organisers, two local representatives from Bamiyan - the Vice Governor of Bamiyan province and the Mayor of the city of Bamiyan - who have attended previous meetings were not able to join this meeting;
8. Expressed its appreciation for the active participation, contribution and comments of the four Afghan high officials (Minister of Culture & Information, two Vice Ministers of Public Works and Urban Development and advisors), which substantially shaped the outcomes of the meeting;

Bamiyan Museum for Peace

9. Recognized the importance and necessity of a Museum for Peace in Bamiyan;
10. Recommended that a Provincial Museum be constructed in Bamiyan and smaller site interpretation centres at specific sites that compose the World Heritage property and the geo-cultural features of the Bamiyan province, and that this Bamiyan Museum should store the fragments collected as well as any other materials and findings from conservation works and archaeological excavations and house a conservation laboratory;
11. Took note that during this 11th Bamiyan Experts Working Group Meeting, Professor Shigeyuki Okazaki from the Japanese Mukogawa Women's University presented the draft design for a potential Bamiyan Museum, along with the model, and that Professor Michael Jansen of Aachen University, Germany, presented the draft guidance and planning of basic infrastructure for site maintenance, including the designing of the site interpretation centre, signage, public access facilities and the site guardians for Shar-i Gholghola, in close vicinity to the World Heritage property;
12. Encouraged the Bamiyan Expert Working Group to create links between ongoing activities and future museum development;
13. Recommended that the UNESCO Kabul Office continue to develop, advocate and raise funds for the Bamiyan Museum for Peace project in cooperation with the Afghan authorities (the Ministry of Information and Culture and the local authorities in Bamiyan), expert institutions and stakeholders, and that the inclusion of a feasibility study for the Bamiyan Museum should be explored within the activities of the Bamiyan Phase IV project and implemented by the UNESCO Kabul Office and relevant expert national and international implementing partners;

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

14. Took note of the initial proposals of four international teams for remedial measures and the future presentation of the two Buddha niches presented at the 10th Expert Working group in Tokyo in 2011 (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 of ICOMOS, Germany);

15. Reiterated that in view of the available scientific data and estimated financial requirements, a total reconstruction of either of the Buddha sculptures cannot be considered at the present time, as concluded at the 9th Working Group Meeting in Paris, March 2011;
16. Recommended in light of the policy statement of the Minister for Information and Culture in regard to the reconstruction of at least one of the Buddha sculptures, that the large Western Buddha niche be consolidated and left empty at the present time as a testimony to the tragic act of destruction, but 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. This feasibility study or studies should be in line with the World Heritage Committee's Decision 36 COM 7A.26 (see page 1) and should 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 their consideration;
17. Recommended that if the partial reassembly of one Buddha niche (Eastern Buddha, small Buddha of 38 metres) is considered, more scientific and technical data should be acquired and the process should be undertaken with a flexible, step-by-step approach;
18. Confirmed that 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;
19. Recommended that a Bamiyan Cultural Landscape management plan be developed and finalized in close collaboration with the local authorities and should serve as a point of reference for all future interventions;
20. Encouraged ICOMOS Germany to share the concept for a site interpretation centre at the Eastern Buddha niche with the participants for comment and advice;

Ensuring site security

21. Noted 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 recognized the efforts of UNESCO and the Ministry of Information and Culture, in cooperation with UNMAS, MACCA and local partners to achieve this important result;
22. Recommended, 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);
23. Recommended 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;
24. Noted the appointment of trained guards and an archaeological police force on site to fight against illicit excavations and looting on the site, and urged 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;
25. Advocated public awareness and education programs in order to address the issue of the illicit traffic of antiquities;
 26. Recommended the incorporation of recent excavations into the site security plan of the MoIC (e.g. MO/Oriental Monastery, MR/ Royal Monastery);

Safeguarding the remains of the Buddhas and their niches

27. Noted with satisfaction the work undertaken by ICOMOS Germany within the UNESCO project framework to achieve the recommendations of the 9th and the 10th Expert Group Meetings 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;
28. Noted that safe accessibility to the lower gallery of the Eastern Buddha niche should be improved;
29. Given the successful completion of the consolidation of the Eastern Buddha, recommended that the repairs therein be monitored closely and that the scaffolding be transferred to the large Western Buddha with the purpose of starting the latter's consolidation work at the earliest, and called for an urgent intervention 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 imminent collapse;
30. Recommended that special attention be paid to the sub-surface area in front of the western niche, which may contain archaeological remains, and that specific initiatives be undertaken in order to contain and control the erosion and alluvial flooding in between and in front of the niches, including the development of local capacities for the management of the necessary geological surveys at the Bamiyan University;
31. Took note that during this 11th Bamiyan Expert Working Group Meeting, Professor Margottini (Italy) presented a measurement of volumetric joint and rock block volume for each area of 1 square meter of the large Western Buddha niche to define how the reinforcement may be applied, according to which it is further noted that if using the same consolidation supporting anchors method as with the Eastern Buddha niche, the operational and material cost is estimated at 708 000 – 770 000 US\$ (without calculating the scaffolding cost);

Adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings

32. Noted the severe damage 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;
33. Noted 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 and completing the pilot project in Cave N(a) etc.;
34. Recommended that local conservation technicians be trained with conservators from Kabul;
35. Urged the implementation of sustainability activities such as site monitoring and maintenance, the construction of the Bamiyan museum, the creation of tourist routes,

- cave key management and security and the installation of secured staircases and banisters in the caves, sign boards and comprehensive site interpretation;
36. Recommended 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 of these World Heritage areas (notably Shar-i-Zohak, Shar-i-Gholghola, Quala-i-Kaphari, Kakrak and Foladi);
 37. Noted 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), and that DAFA (Délégation d'Archéologie Française en Afghanistan) will continue to support scientifically and financially the work of Professor Tarzi;
 38. Encouraged the Afghan authorities to secure lands containing archaeological remains in order to ensure their preservation;
 39. Recommended the conducting of an archaeological survey in the Bamiyan Valley and the publication of results in comparison with previous results in 2005 and 2006 to investigate and identify the presence of buried cultural property and the extent of archaeological sites;
 40. Took note the 'Documentations of the Bamiyan Sites: Vol. 1: *Cultural Landscape of the Central Part of the Bamiyan Valley in the 1970s*' as well as Vol. 2: *Topographical Survey of the Central Part of the Bamiyan Valley*' produced by NRICP Tokyo and further took note that the Vol 3: *Conservation of the Mural Paintings of the Bamiyan Buddhist Caves*' and Vol 4: *Architectural Survey of the Buddhist Caves*' are under preparation;

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

41. Noted 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;
42. Recommended however that an archaeological site map be established and cross-read with the Cultural Master Plan in order to avoid damage to potentially imbedded archaeological remains;
43. Lauded 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, and in attaining the highest school enrolment rate for girls, the highest women's participation in elections in Afghanistan and a net increase in cultural tourism;
44. Took note of the production of the first *'Annual Progress Report (June 2010-June 2011) for the Preparation of a Management Plan for Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley'* and further took note that the second *'Annual Progress Report (January to December 2012) for the Preparation of a Management Plan for Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley'* is under production;
45. Recommended that, in order to finalise the Management Plan for the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage Property, 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;

46. Urged 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, including enforcement of building codes and controls on development in the buffer zones and property boundary of the World Heritage areas and other areas protected under the Afghan Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties 2004;
47. Recommended 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);
48. Urged the reinforcement of capacity building within the Provincial Government and the University of Bamiyan through the organization of training workshops (on Global Information Systems, Management, Tourism and Archaeology) in Bamiyan and in partnerships with universities abroad, where appropriate;
49. Recommended the creation of a Quality Control Commission for development projects within the 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;
50. Welcomed the proposition of the Ministry of Urban Development to share their Master Plan for Bamiyan with the MoIC, Bamiyan authorities and the BWG for comment and advice for the formal approval;
51. Encouraged that all archaeological surveys, documentation, excavations, conservation activities, be integrated into the Cultural Master Plan under the supervision of the MoIC;
52. Welcomed the presentation of the Afghanistan Operations Centre (AGOC) of UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services) on the Foladi road and their intentions for flexibility, consultation and information sharing prior to and during the construction; welcomed the provision of a heritage impact assessment by the Ministry of Culture for inclusion in their annual state of conservation report (due February 2013) to the World Heritage Committee; and took note that UNOPS also presented during the meeting the foreseen upgrading of the Bamiyan expert project, funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA);

Other recommendations

53. Encouraged 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;
54. Underlined 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;
55. Underlined 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;
56. Recommended 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;

57. Considered 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;
58. Encouraged 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, that no projects should be implemented unless they have been discussed by the Expert Working Group and cleared by the Afghan authorities, and that major interventions, moreover, should be submitted to the World Heritage Committee according to paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
59. Noted that the Afghan authorities, together with its international implementing partners, proposed that the Desired State of Conservation for the property should be attained gradually in view of its potential removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
60. Recognized the efforts made to improve the State of Conservation of the property and conclude that the Bamiyan site can be a successful story for heritage conservation and sustainable development;
61. 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.