



Unofficial Translation of Letter

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Ministry of Information and Culture

Directorate of preservation and restoration of historical monuments

Operation Department

Date: 28 January 2014

Ref: 1144

TO: UNESCO Kabul Office:

Herewith we are sending the eleven pages annual report in regards to the conservation status of World Heritage Sites in danger the Jam minaret and Bamiyan Cultural sites

With Regards,

Deploma Architect Abdul Ahad Abassi

Director of preservation and restoration of historical monuments



دولت جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان
وزارت اطلاعات و فرهنگ

د افغانستان اسلامي جمهوري دولت
د اطلاعاتو او فرهنگ وزارت



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ministry of Information and Culture

ریاست حفظ و ترمیم آبدات تاریخی
مدیریت اجراییه

شماره.....۱۱۴۴

تاریخ ۱۳۹۲/۱۱/۱۶

به دفتر محترم یونسکو مقیم در کابل !

اینک وسیله صادره هـذا گزارش پیرامون وضع حفاظتی میراث های معروض به خطر که در مورد منارجام وسایت فرهنگی بامیان در ظرف (۱۱) ورق ترتیب یافته بشما ارسال است

بالحترام

دبیلوم مهندس عبدالاحد عباسی
رئیس حفظ و ترمیم آبدات تاریخی



د افغانستان اسلامي جمهوري دولت
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Ministry of Information and Culture

رياست : حفظ و ترميم ابدات تاريخي
مديريت : اجرائيه

شماره.....

تاريخ /

Report on the State of Conservation Cultural Landscape and Archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley (2003, in Danger) ID Number: Ref: C208rev

1. Response from Afghanistan to the World Heritage Committee's Decision 37COM 7A.30
 - a) Corrective measures taken by Afghanistan in reply to the World Heritage Committee's Decision(s)

Management Plan:

The Management Plan of the World Site of Bamiyan has been prepared by the government of Afghanistan in corporation with UNESCO; this plan has been the subject of several meetings and discussion with local stakeholders in Bamiyan and international expert in periodical Bamiyan Expert Working Groups. In this frame the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture with help of UNESCO has organized International Co-ordination Meetings in Bamiyan since 2011. The meetings provided a unique opportunity for Afghan Government Officials from different and related ministries and institutions (Bamiyan Governor Office, Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Aviation and Transport, Ministry of Public Works) to share their plans aiming protecting the world heritage site of Bamiyan. These coordination meetings are part of the structre of the management system in place in the Bamiyan Valley.

Cultural Master Plan:

Bamiyan Cultural Master Plan was developed in consultation with UNESCO and implementing partners in 2007 and has been adopted as a policy by the local government in Bamiyan and the Ministries of Urban Development and Information and Culture at the national level. The Master Plan is functioning as a guide to urban development within the boundaries of the World heritage Property and the Valley in order to mitigate potentially negative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. The Master Plan is being monitored by different levels of government with qualified success, but needs to be simplified as much as be applicable for local Bamiyan authorities to implement more effectively in the ground. The principles of plan are currently being incorporated into a new Urban Development Master Plan by the Ministry of Urban



Development which is the official and legal document for development in the Bamiyan Valley into the future.

Site Guards:

Since 2005 the MoIC with the help of UNESCO Kabul Office is funding to hire 8 on-site guards in each of the properties within the serial nomination, these resources are currently deployed to control illegal or unauthorized access to the sites to do so in 2013, the MoIC has signed an agreement with UNESCO allocating sufficient found for the guards. However the Ministry of Interior has also deployed a team of police officers from the specialized unit (012) for the protection of cultural properties to monitor and safeguard the World Heritage properties within the Valley. These steps have effectively stopped illicit traffic and unauthorized access in the WH property and represent effective implementation of corrective measures on site security.

Education and Public Awareness:

UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture have organized regular stakeholder meetings in Bamiyan to raise-awareness amongst local government actors, private land holders and NGOs to help ensure the compliance with the building codes developed within the management plan and master plan for Bamiyan.

MoIC and the UNESCO Kabul Office organized two information sessions at the Bamiyan University in September 2013. Three ICOMOS experts, the director of historical monuments and UNESCO staff gave presentations and answered students' questions on different aspects of the cultural heritage of Bamiyan and restoration of historical buildings.

With the initiate from UNESCO Kabul Office we received the Dari version of Expert Working Meeting recommendation which is published in large scale to be disseminated to local authorities in Bamiyan. Although are there several useful information produced by international experts and organization but as they are not translated into local languages, are not going to be used effectively. It is hoped that the translation of main documents related to Bamiyan cultural heritage preservation, could be considered within all future projects for Bamiyan.

Stabilization of the Buddha niches and conservation of the fragments:

Eastern Buddha:

In 2011-2012 the MoIC achieved one of its big aims by finishing the stabilization of the rear wall of Eastern Buddha niche done by MoIC, UNESCO and ICOMOS, improving the safety of tourism access and beginning the installation of information panels in the niche for the public.

To further improve the safety of visitors at the site and also to enhance the site understanding and interpretation, the MoIC and ICOMOS Germany made a plan to construct a platform in the lower part of the niche to prevent rockfall in the niche and to enable the MoIC to remove some of the temporary construction built in the niche to cover the remaining budha fragments which has a visual impact on the site.

With the help of ICOMOS Germany, the new platform was also supposed to prevent the sliding movments of the rear wall which has a huge crak running from the top of the niche all the way to the bottom where the concrete support beam was placed and which will connect to the new platform. The new platform will be supported by two pillars in the shape of the original ones that had been reconstructed by the ASI in the 1970s to



commemorate the monument before its destruction. Work on this has begun, but has been postponed due to some concerns also raised about visual impact on the monument of the pillars. This issue was discussed at the 12th Bamiyan Expert Working Group and there are different opinions from different ICOMOS representatives at the meeting. ICOMOS International has been requested to carry out mission to assess the site, but has recommend that some of expert members of Bamiyan Working Group have already necessary knowledge and expertise to make there recomendatins to the Afghan government.

Therefore, the Government has agreed to bring different international and Afghan experts together in Afghanistan to discuss the issue further and make recommendations to either a) discontinue the intervention, b) modify the intervention in some way, or c) continue the intervention in 2014 as originally planned. This meeting will be organized in Afghanistan in February-March 2014 and implement recommendations of the experts and government authorities, before work should commence at the site in April.

The final solution found and any changes to the plan must also consider the problem of roackfall in the niche, as well as the risk of sliding and collapse of the back of the niche if it does not have extra support from the platform. This is why ICOMOS Germany and the MoIC had first proposed the platform with supporting pillars.

Western Buddha niche

We have a great hope to address the problems of the rear of the Western Buddha niche which is in a critical situation and needs urgent attention avoiding further destruction. In 2013 the MoIC and ICOMOS began to construct the scaffolding in the niche which will give access to for conservation purposes. It is now 70 percent complete and will be finished in 2014. Also the constructing of container as temporary shelters for the fragments of the Western Buddha was completed during 2011, improving the conditions and conservation environment for the fragments of the sculpture.

b) Progress towards the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger

Stabilizing the eastern Buddha niche brings the site closer to its removal from the List in Danger after de-mining project completed in the Sites. If a plan to stabilize the western Buddha carries out in 2014 and onwards, we have a great hope the immediate threat of collapse and to the integrity of this core part of this world heritage site will be removed.

Further conservation of mural paintings was undertaken by the MoIC, UNESCO and NRICPT in 2013 and training for conservation and archaeology for Afghan experts within the MoIC carried in out in Japan in previous years. These capacity-building efforts will help ensure the conservation of paintings in the longest-term as well as towards the goal of removing the list of in danger.

Other activities, including the provision of security guards within the property and further steps for the management plan and the new Urban master plan are assisting with achieving the goal. Once the Western Buddha is stabilized and sites such as Gholghalah, Zohak and Kakrak are conserved, the condition for removal from Danger List should have been achieved.

Shari Gholgholah:

Consolidation of some parts of Shahr-i-Gholghola including towers, walls of the Masjid, and domical chambers was implemented in 2013 with cooperation of Archeology Institute of MoIC, Department of Conservation of Historical Monuments of MoIC, and honored experts from UNESCO. Ministry of Information and Culture hopes for the



continuation of the consolidation in the year 2014 onwards with support from the Government of Italy and UNESCO.

In 2013, with the project funded by the Government of Italy, UNESCO Kabul, ICOMOS Germany and the Ministry of Culture undertook 3d modeling of the site to better understand the topography. From this documentation and previous damage assessments carried out by UNESCO, Aachen University and the MoIC, a conservation treatment plan was developed to address the problems of erosion in the site and to carry out necessary conservation on some of the more important mudbrick buildings that cover the site and which are collapsing year by year. The project will also increase safe access to the site by stabilizing the walking paths and provide some information points for the public to better understand the importance of the site. In 2014 the activities will also include some further archaeological investigation to better understand the chronology of the site and further elaborate the OUV. If this project can continue from 2014 to 2016 to conserve many more buildings, it will hopefully meet the conditions to remove the site from immediate danger.

Kakrak and Shari Zohak:

The Italian funded project also carried out 3D modeling of Kakrak and Zohak to understand the situation of erosion and conservation needs at these sites. Plans are being developed to undertake conservation and protect the sites from erosion. It is hoped that conservation and archaeology work will begin at the site in 2014-2015, depending on the funds available.

c) Difficulties in implementing corrective measures

The corrective measures, involving site security, stabilization of the Western Buddha niche, conservation of the fragments, conservation and archaeology at Gholgholah and the development of a management plan place a lot of demands for human and financial resources on the Afghan Government and the Ministry of Information and Culture in particular. This presents difficulties in meeting the entire financial burden and requires continued support from the international community to address all the necessary measures adequately.

2. Other Current Conservation issues:

a) Khwaja Sabz Push Shrine in Bamiyan and the Foladi Valley;

Hopefully a considerable conservation project was done in the vicinity of Foladi Valley at the archeological site of Khawja Sabz Push. The project was implemented by MoIC/ UNESCO Kabul Office with support of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

This site which is a large complex of three buildings with a single mausoleum and one of the outstanding Islamic living buildings in the province has been an integral part of the community life in this rural settlement. It is a place of worship and symbolizes an important connection with religious heritage and community identity. The preservation of such monuments and a significant communal benefit which promotes a positive inter-cultural link between the communities living in Bamiyan.

The conservation work started in spring 2012 and finished end of fall 2012, the overall objective of the project was not only to document and potentially undertake stabilization work on a historical site but also to raise public awareness throughout Bamiyan of the value of its cultural heritage and the responsibilities of its protection and preservation for future generations.



b) The Other 8 sites of WH;

These sites listed within the nomination are all archaeologically and architecturally complex and are subject to the pressures of erosion through rain and heavy spring snowmelt. In some case this poses a threat to the integrity of the sites, where towers and buildings at Shari Zohak, Kakrak and Shari Gholgholah are in danger of collapse or serious and rapid deterioration. Thankfully, the urgent and emergency problems of Shari Gholgholah are currently being addressed with support from the Government of Italy and UNESCO Kabul Office. The government does not have the technical expertise and financial resources to deal with all these issues simultaneously and very much needs continued assistance from UNESCO and the international community to address these issues presently.

Many parts of the site within and outside the boundaries face increasing urban pressures from the re-settlement of people within the Valley. Some land within the boundaries of the Buddha Cliff, especially, is in private hands. Much of the vernacular architecture, traditional land use, canal and irrigation systems that make up the contemporary cultural landscape lie outside the present boundaries of the site and is under increasing pressure for development and urban growth. There is also the potential for mining in the nearby mountains of Bamiyan Province which will largely impact further on population size and urbanism in the Valley. Large scale development within the boundaries, adjacent or in nearby villages has the potential to negatively impact the OUV of the site. At the moment, this development is being curbed and controlled through the implementation of the Cultural Master plan, but it still remains as one of the greatest challenges to the conservation of the site in the long term.

3. Major Restorations / alterations and new constructions within the protected area and buffer zone envisaged:

Foladi Valley Road:

The Government of Japan and UNOPS have started the construction of a road in the Foladi Valley, near to and within the boundaries of the World Heritage Property. The road will go over the existing road and add bitumen to the dirt road. The Ministry of Information and Culture have been advising UNOPS on the need to provide inputs for a Heritage Impact Assessment to help in the planning of the road construction, especially in the areas where the road comes near to or inside the boundaries of the property. The Institute of Archaeology of the MoIC has undertaken several missions to the site in 2012 – 2013 (in cooperation with UNOPS) to undertake archaeological surveys and test trenches in parts of the proposed construction area to assess the potential impact of the construction and to propose mitigation measures. In one part of the road for example, the road was diverted to go around a local shrine and protect it for the future. Potential archaeological areas were documented near to the existing road and no salvage was necessary as the road did not disturb these places.

The Ministry of Information and Culture has now completed a Heritage Impact Assessment with all the information for the road construction and found that no damage to the OUV of the site has taken place.

Improvement of Road Access to World Heritage sites in Bamiyan:

Improvement of access roads to Bamiyan Heritage Sites and the other facilities will promote tourism and local employment generation and assist in preservation of these historical and cultural sites. This in turn can become an economic opportunity for the



locals as the tourists can be more attracted and facilitated once the access is improved and systemized. MRRD in coordination with Ministry of Information and Culture had a coordination meeting with provincial government of Bamyan province and all provincial department. The understanding of all parties was that improvement of access roads will benefit the locals plus will help preserve the heritage status as well. MRRD will therefore design and implement a model project using local material and labor forces; the archeology and historic landscape has to be kept as it is to preserve the OUV. UNESCO and MoIC will further advice MRRD team during design and supervision. The planned activities under this task from 2014 onwards are listed below:

- Improvement of road access 9km
- Improvement of footpath between the two status of bhoda
- Parking facilities
- Tourist information centers
- Waste collection points, sanitation bathrooms and water wells.
- Training and Development
- Implementation supervision (permanent staff of ministry of information and culture will be part of supervision group with MRRD and others)

The design of access roads and tourist information centers will be prepared in coordination with Ministry of Information and Culture and UNESCO.

Buddha Niches:

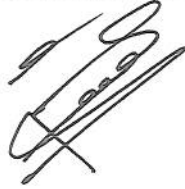
HE Minister for Information and Culture has requested UNESCO and other partners to assist the Government in at least partial reconstruction of one of the Buddha sculptures. More recently he has outlined this intention at the 11th and 12th Bamiyan Expert Working Groups. Several different proposals have been suggested for the Eastern Buddha, most notably the proposal by ICOMOS Germany, and the Government wishes to pursue one of these options when the stabilization measures in the lower gallery have been completed and when funding is available for this purpose.

Best Regards,

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Director of Historical Monuments

Department



Nabi Frahi

Deputy Minister

Acting Minister of Information
and Culture

