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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Culture & Tourism
Authority for research & Conservation of
Cultural Heritage



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Director World Heritage Center
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Subject:- RESPONSE TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISION

Dear Kishore,

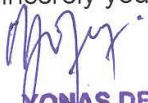
In accordance with Decision **(36 COM 7B 42)**, I am pleased to submit a progress report to the World Heritage Center on the issues raised by the World Heritage Committee, in the indicative format, for examination of the Committee at its 38th session in 2014. The report is therefore enclosed to this letter.

Ethiopia wishes to reassure the World Heritage Committee that the State Party will continue to implement the World Heritage Convention (1972) to ensure the sustained preservation of the world heritage properties elsewhere.

Should you require any further information, I always remain at your disposal.



Sincerely yours,


YONAS DESTA
GENERAL DIRECTOR



GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

**STATE PARTY REPORT ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE
ROCK-HEWN CHURCHES, LALIBELA (Ethiopia)
Property ID C 18**

**IN RESPONSE TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISION
WHC 36COM 7B.42**

FOR SUBMISSION BY 1 FEBRUARY 2014

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WHC DECISION

Executive Summary

1. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision
 - 1.1 Paragraph 3- Finalize the maps in the context of the retrospective inventory and plans of the suggested buffer zone;
 - 1.2 Paragraph 4- Finalize the consultation process for the draft Management Plan of the property and submit the **draft Management Plan** and the **resettlement action plan** and the **development plan** for the Lalibela area
 - 1.3 Requests for the State Party to:
 - a) Submit details of the type and frequency of monitoring arrangements for all temporary shelters,
 - b) Regularly provide information about the World Bank Tourism Development Project that is being implemented at the property,
 - c) Pursue its efforts to implement the pilot preservation project at Gabriel Rufael Church in cooperation with the World Monuments Fund;
 - 1.4 Conduct a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), in conformity with the ICOMOS Guidelines on Heritage Impact Assessments for World Heritage cultural properties;
 - 1.5 Submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2014, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in 2014.
2. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party
3. Potential restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area (core zone and buffer zone) that might be envisaged;

**The World Heritage committee Decision in the Thirty-sixth Sessions in Saint
Petersburg, Russian Federation, June 24, 2012 - July 6, 2012**

Committee Decisions:

36COM 7B.42

Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela (Ethiopia) (C 18)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-12/36.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision 34 COM 7B.44, adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010),
3. Acknowledges the information provided by the State Party, notably the development of maps of the property's boundaries and suggested buffer zone, and requests the State Party to submit the finalized maps in the context of the retrospective inventory and plans of the suggested buffer zone as a minor modification;
4. Encourages the State Party to finalize the consultation process for the draft Management Plan for the property, and also requests the State Party to submit the draft Management Plan, including the resettlement action plan and the development plan for Lalibela area for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
5. Reiterates its request to the State Party to:
 - a) Submit details of the type and frequency of monitoring arrangements for all temporary shelters,
 - b) Regularly provide information about the World Bank Tourism Development Project that is being implemented at the property,
 - c) Pursue its efforts to implement the pilot preservation project at Gabriel Rufael Church in cooperation with the World Monuments Fund;
6. Further requests the State Party to conduct a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), in conformity with the ICOMOS Guidelines on Heritage Impact Assessments for World

Heritage cultural properties, to evaluate the potential impact of any planned demographic or other changes to strengthen tourist-targeted services in the property or immediate surroundings on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;

7. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2014, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in 2014.

Executive Summery

This progress report on the State of Consecration of the Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela World Heritage Site:

- Responds to the world Heritage Committee Decision 36COM 7B.42 made in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation (2012) by providing a detailed report on the issues mentioned in the decision.
- Presents the Management Plan of the world heritage property.
- Provides the results from the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA).

1. Responses of the State Party

This document includes the progress report requested by the World Heritage Committee in 36 COM 7B.42 and related issues regarding the management of the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela and other related topics. This progress report is provided for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in 2014.

Paragraph 3

Maps of the boundaries and buffer zone;

In response to the Committee's request, the State Party invited the National Mapping Agency to finalize the map of the property and all the required data are obtained based on the draft boundary delineation of the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela. The data on the proposed boundary are also included in the draft law that manages the property, which will be endorsed by the Council of Ministers shortly.

Paragraph 4

Finalizes the consultation process for the draft Management Plan, submit the draft Management Plan and the resettlement action plan and the development plan for the Lalibela area;

In response to the Committee' demand, the State Party in collaboration with the UNESCO Addis Ababa Liaison Office in Addis Ababa a Validation Workshop to finalize the consultation process was held on 21 and 22 December 2013, and was attended by all the relevant stakeholders of the property. The Management Plan document is therefore attached to this progress report for evaluation by the Committee and Advisory Bodies (See Annex-1).

The resettlement plan is one of the four components in the World Bank (ESTDP) Project. As part of the resettlement action plan, run by the World Bank project, some households were relocated from the Core area of the property to a newly designated settlement zone. Accordingly the resettlement action plans have the following activities:

- Provide the necessary compensations for those who were relocated;
- Land allotment for households moved to the new settlement area;
- Carry out infrastructure development in the new settlement site;
- Livelihood and income restoration to individuals put out of their previous place.

Paragraph 5

Requests for the State Party to:

a) Submit details of the type and frequency of monitoring arrangements for all temporary shelters;

Following the construction of the temporary shelter on the five selected structures of the Rock-hewn churches of Lalibela in February 2008, regular visits were carried out by experts from the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH). However, the original agreement was designed to undertake monitoring arrangement once in every five year. Therefore the first organized monitoring arrangement of the shelters was initiated in January 2014 by the State Party. As a result, a group of experts, from Addis Ababa University, is engaged in the shelter monitoring task and the inspection group is still on the field visit in Lalibela.

The inspection tasks of the group include;

- A field visit, to the Churches of Lalibela, to collect information through consultations, along with close personal observation;

- Monitoring the overall impacts of the shelters, check the extent of stability at the bases of the shelter, the columns and the roofing;
- Assessing the level of risk preparedness at the site level;
- Assessing whether the shelter project has been relevant; effective;
- The consultants consider and come up with a suggestion on the impact of conservation problems;
- The experts are expected to make independent assessment, if the shelters effectively protect the churches from further deterioration.

b) Regularly provide information about the World Bank Tourism Development Project that is being implemented at the property;

In response to the requests to the Committee's decision the State Party would like to provide detailed activities being undertaken by the World Bank, Sustainable Tourism Development Project, in Lalibela. The World Bank project has four components in Lalibela: Destination Development, Capacity Building, Site Promotion and Community Involvement. Currently the project is actively working on major components of the project: Site Promotion and Destination Development components.

- i. In relation to Destination Development, the first major tasks are providing clean water and installing treatment plants for solid and liquid refusals, which include providing toilets facilities and vehicles to transport liquid and dry wastes for treatment.
- ii. The second major tasks are constructing bypass roads to connect Lalibela to the nearby historic areas that include the semi-monolithic monastery of Asheton Maryam, the monastery Yemrehanna Kristos, *Nakutoleab and Bilbela Chirckos Churches; and constructing and renovating cobblestone pavements within the town of Lalibela;*
- iii. The third major task is landscape development within the world heritage site. The landscape development activities involve the design and implementation stages and currently the design stage has been nearly finalized;
- iv. In connection to capacity building, currently the project is working on product diversification and providing successive training that contribute for product diversification. In relation to tourist service provision improvement, initiatives are taken to set standards for some service delivery institutions.

c) The State Party pursue its efforts to implement the pilot preservation project at Gabriel Rufael Church in cooperation with the World Monuments Fund;

In response to the demand by the committee in relation to the implement of the pilot preservation project at Gabriel Rufael Church, the tender was offered to international consultants (PALNARCH and Studio Progettazione Croci) to work in collaboration with the local consultant (MH Engineering). Accordingly the final draft of the design document was presented to different forums, organized by ARCCH, by the consultants for discussions. The updated draft document was once again presented to the experts' panel held in Addis Ababa, in August 2013. Following the subsequent discussions, the final draft was submitted to ARCCH by UNESCO in October 2012. As further evaluation of the draft document was required, local institutions, from higher education, working in the same area are invited to assess the document for further evaluation. Therefore the draft document is now being evaluated by professionals working in the same field of study. Once the results of the experts' evaluation are accepted by the State Party, the preservation project will soon be launched.

Paragraph 6

Conduct a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), in conformity with the ICOMOS Guidelines on Heritage Impact Assessments for World Heritage cultural properties;

In response to the request from the World Heritage Committee and corresponding demand from the ESTDP, World Bank Project, a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) had been conducted in the Rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela as well as in the Stele of Aksum in August 2012 to avoid any potential threat to the World Heritage sites. The HIA had been conducted by experts in archaeology and world heritage management, assigned by ARCCH. For detailed information the HIA document is annexed to this progress report (see also Annex-2).

2. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party

The draft management plan document has proposed the preservation of the world heritage property as a landscape, which includes festival spots and market area as an integrated landscape management. The intangible elements of the Rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela and all movable heritage collections will also be preserved using an integrated management of the cultural landscape.

3. Potential restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area (core zone and buffer zone) that might be envisaged;

The proposed boundary of the cultural landscape includes the natural corridors of the world heritage property as well as the associated hills and valley hoping that these areas will be protected in the revised the Master Plan of the Lalibela town to guide the future land use and development of the town. The plan seeks to manage the development in the historic town in a way that fits with the purposes of the world heritage preservation and the strategic placement of future buildings so that to integrate development efforts with the wider principles of sustainability. The entire strategy of the plan will be achieved through detailed policies which set out how specific proposals for development will be treated.

4. Annexes

Annex: 4.1 The Management Plan for the Rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela (2013).

Annex: 4.2 Heritage Impact Assessment on Aksum and Lalibela (August 2012).

Annex: 4. 3 proposed map of the property

