1. BASIC DATA

**State Party:** Tunisia

**Name of property:** Medina of Tunis

**Location:** Governorate of Tunis

**Inscription:** 1979

**Brief Description:** Under the Almohads and the Hafsids, from the 12th to the 16th century, Tunis was considered one of the greatest and wealthiest cities in the Islamic world. Some 700 monuments, including palaces, mosques, mausoleums, madrasas and fountains, testify to this remarkable past.

**Date of ICOMOS' approval of this report:** 17 March 2010

2. ISSUES RAISED

**Background**

The inventory included in the nomination dossier of the Medina of Tunis notes that no maps were submitted together with the dossier in 1978. It was indicated that the property comprised 270ha.

A letter dated 2 July 2004 sent by the Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art to the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Division, provided a "map for the Medina of Tunis showing the boundary of the property inscribed on the World Heritage List and the different levels of protection for the traditional urban fabric". This map shows 7 areas surrounded by an "area of environment", a larger zone of protection, identified as follows: historic area of the Medina of Tunis (A), Sidi El Bechir (B), Sebkha (C), El Morkadh (D), Bab Souika (E), Halfaouine (F) and Tronja (G), covering an area of about 70ha.

During the 1st cycle of Periodic Reporting (29 September 2000), it was stated that the buffer zone was not formally established. It was also indicated that the Institut National du Patrimoine and the Association de sauvegarde de la Médina were developing a safeguard plan.

The retrospective inventory process identified the information needs regarding the property and requested the State Party to clarify if the map submitted in 1984 was showing the boundaries of the World Heritage property and submit a large-scale topographic or cadastral map to show the boundaries of the inscribed property and the buffer zone. It was also requested that the size in hectares of both the property and buffer zone be provided.

At the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Seville, 2009), the Committee adopted the following decision:

**Decision 33 COM 8B.45:**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-09/33.COM/8B and WHC-09/33.COM/INF.8B1.Add,

2. Refers the examination of the proposed buffer zones for the Medina of Tunis, Tunisia, back to the State Party to allow it to:

   a) Clarify the areas of the proposed property boundary and that of the buffer zone in relation to those provided with a map of 1984 showing 7 areas surrounded by an "area of environment";

   b) Review the existing proposal to delineate a buffer zone so as to ensure the proper conservation and protection of the property, taking into consideration its values and its integration with the setting;

   c) Provide information on how the proposed area will be managed and the regulatory measures foreseen for the buffer zone. Information on how these measures articulate with other planning tools for the place and the mechanisms for implementation should be provided;

   d) Consider requesting a mission to the property to consider the proposed boundaries in conjunction with the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, when completed.

**Modification**

In February 2010, the State Party submitted a map showing the boundaries of the property and the proposed buffer zone. It indicated that the area of the inscribed property is 296ha 41a 39ca while that of the buffer area is 190ha 18a 91ca.

Although the original nomination could consider that the property consisted of seven serial sites with a protected area around them, in the current map it is included as a whole. However, because no precise boundaries were submitted at the time of nomination it is difficult to ascertain to which extent this constitutes a modification on the boundaries.
The inclusion of the seven sites inscribed as a series originally in 1979 and their immediate protection zone in the definition of the property itself ensures ICOMOS that the key elements of the property of Outstanding Universal Value are all included and interconnected by an urban fabric which now enjoys the same recognition and protection. The buffer zone proposed by the State Party adds to this protection and should, with the previous elements, enable effective protection and conservation of the property, while allowing for its values and integration in its environment. The fact that the limit of the proposed buffer zone and that of the inscribed property coincide at two points to the south of the Medina does not constitute a problem for ICOMOS, which considers that each of the seven sites inscribed in 1979 is well integrated inside the proposed boundaries, and that they are all surrounded by an urban fabric of sufficient density to ensure their protection.

The State Party has also provided the following information and indications concerning the management of the site and regulatory measures:

The Medina of Tunis has been granted national statutory protection for 88 historic monuments. It also enjoys national protection for 5 monuments, 14 streets (including 3 souks) and one square. Its protection is ensured by the Code du Patrimoine (Law 94-35 of 24 February 1994), Law 2001-118 of 6 December 2001 on the protection of the archaeological, historic and traditional arts heritage, the statutory protection decrees and protection orders of around one hundred monuments, and by the Plan d'aménagement urbain of Tunis (PAU). The Medina of Tunis has a safeguard and management structure under the responsibility of the Institut National du Patrimoine and of an Association de Sauvegarde de la Médina which is under the Municipal Authority of Tunis.

3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed boundaries for the Medina of Tunis, Tunisia, be approved.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Medina of Tunis, Tunisia, be approved.
Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone