

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
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МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/AS/1545/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 18 January 2017

H. E. Mr Rapulane Sydney Molekane
Permanent Delegation of the Republic of South
Africa to UNESCO
Ambassade de l'Afrique du Sud
59, Quai d'Orsay
75343 Paris Cedex 07

World Heritage List 2017

#Khomani Cultural Landscape (South Africa) – Interim Report

Dear Sir,

As prescribed by the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies have been requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2017. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation process.

The joint ICOMOS/IUCN technical evaluation mission to “#Khomani Cultural Landscape” was carried out by Mr Munyaradzi Manyanga (Zimbabwe) for ICOMOS and Mr Geoffroy Mauvais (France) for IUCN, from 2 to 8 October 2016. The mission experts highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 14 October 2016, a letter requesting additional information was sent by ICOMOS on the following issues: more detailed description of the nominated property, distribution and location of attributes and of other San communities, rationale for the delineation of the boundaries, protection and management. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 14 November 2016 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2016, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2017. The additional information, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2017.

We thank you for the availability of your Delegation to the meeting held on 26 November 2016 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. During its last part meeting, the Panel has identified areas which would require the need to review, augment and possibly reconfigure the nomination dossier.

While the ICOMOS Panel considered that the #Khomani Cultural Landscape might have the potential to meet the requirements for Outstanding Universal Value, this has not yet been demonstrated. This evaluation by the ICOMOS Panel rests primarily on continuing questions about the detailed description of the nominated property and of its attributes, the justification for inscription and the selection of the criteria, a revised comparative analysis. These issues are briefly considered in turn below.

The nomination dossier is very limited and does not provide sufficient information and description of the nominated property; it focuses on the languages and other intangible associations rather than describing how the landscape reflects these associations and how it has been shaped over centuries by the activity of the nomadic San communities.

The ICOMOS Panel found that the justification for inscription and for the criteria are mainly based on arguments that do not fulfill the requirements of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, which is a property based convention, or are not sufficiently reflected by the site and its attributes, because these have not been clearly identified and spelled out. The Panel found that there is a need for a robust narrative based on solid and revised arguments to support the justification for inscription.

The comparative analysis also need further expansion as this has not been sufficiently developed and has been mainly oriented to compare intangible aspects related to the different indigenous peoples instead of looking at how well the comparatives and the property illustrate through tangible and intangible attributes the associations and the interaction between the populations and the territory.

The comparison should also examine similarities and differences with properties from the sub – Saharan context and from the neighbouring countries.

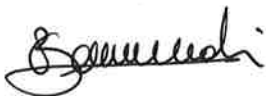
Other key issue concern the integrity of the property, as the chosen boundaries do not seem to reflect the nature of this property as an associative cultural landscape; in fact, they have been confined to those of the Gemsbok National Park. The ICOMOS Panel also discussed the issue of authenticity in relation to the criteria under which the property has been presented and in relation to the displacement of the San communities since the colonial period and then in the early 1930s when the park was established. ICOMOS considers that a reflection on the opportunity to modify the boundaries to include other areas that are important for their associative values and that contribute to the definition of this landscape would be necessary. This work needs to be based on the results of further research and inventories of the attributes and features illustrating values and processes underlying this cultural landscape.

Given the range of substantial inter-related issues mentioned above and the short time which is allowed by the Operational Guidelines to address them, ICOMOS considers that the work will need to extend beyond the current evaluation cycle.

In closing, please be assured that ICOMOS well understands that the issues identified by the ICOMOS Panel will be met with deep disappointment by the many experts and local and national authorities that have been working closely together for some years already. If requested, ICOMOS would be ready and willing to work with the States Parties once the current cycle is over to consider possible ways forward, along the same collaborative lines as has been undertaken in recent years with several States Parties in order to achieve a positive outcome in a future cycle.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation process.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to Department of Environmental Affairs
 IUCN
 UNESCO World Heritage Centre