

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 40 COM 7A.
 - a) **Corrective measures taken by Afghanistan in reply to the World Heritage Committee's Decision(s)**

Management Plan:

The Management 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 the help of UNESCO has organized International Co-ordination Meetings in Bamiyan in Munich in December, 2016. The meetings provided a unique opportunity for Afghan Government Officials from relevant ministries and institutions (Bamiyan Governor Office, Ministry of Information and Culture) to share their plans for protecting the world heritage site of Bamiyan. These coordination meetings are part of the structure of the management system in place in the Bamiyan Valley. The central and local government are making their effort to make a proper land use control through periodical community meeting.

Cultural Master Plan:

The Bamiyan Cultural Master Plan was developed in consultation with UNESCO and implementing partners in 2007, and has continued to provide strong guidance for urban development planning. Within the framework of the Japanese FIT project, the Government of Afghanistan and UNESCO jointly organized a community consultation workshop in Bamiyan in October 2016 concerning the Bamiyan Cultural Master Plan. Some 200 local community members attended this workshop to raise awareness of heritage management in Bamiyan and to assess levels of integration between the Cultural Master Plan and the Government's City Master Plan.

The Cultural Master Plan has already created a strong mandate for controlling urban growth in and around the cultural properties that comprise the serial site. The auto-repair bazaar and wood bazaar have both been relocated from the city Centre to adjacent valleys that do not contain culturally important sites. Similarly, a significant new housing development has been planned further out of the city Centre, away from the historical sites. Nevertheless, there have been some developments close to heritage properties, and further coordination and joint planning will be required to prevent these kinds of activities in future. To this end, another workshop will be organized by the authorities and UNESCO in 2017 to provide further support and guidance for integrating the Cultural Master Plan into the City Master Plan.

Site Guards:

The Government of Afghanistan continues to employ 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. In addition, the Ministry of Interior Affairs employs 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.

Education and Public Awareness:

In September and October 2016, the Government of Afghanistan and UNESCO had a series of meetings in Kabul to discuss the future plans for the World Heritage Property. The participated authorities are the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Urban Development, the Governor of Bamiyan and the Mayor. The aforementioned workshop in Bamiyan provided local communities with an opportunity to publicly engage with Government representatives about heritage management and urban development.

Western Buddha Niche:

Funded by the Government of Japan, the authorities and UNESCO jointly conducted a condition assessment of the Western Buddha niche in 2016 in preparation for stabilization work. The condition assessment provided the first eye-level photographic survey of the rear wall of the niche, and creates an invaluable basis for future conservation planning. At the same time, the authorities in cooperation with UNESCO has reinforced the existing scaffolding structure in the niche to ensure that it is capable of reaching the full height of the niche, and to ensure that it meets international safety standards. In 2017, the authorities aims to complete the scaffolding.

b) Progress towards the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger**Eastern Buddha Niche:**

At its 40th Session the World Heritage Committee reiterated its request that any proposals to reconstruct the Eastern Buddha statue are appraised in relation to the OUV of the property 'and on an agreed overall approach to conservation and presentation of the property, and that those are reviewed by the Advisory Bodies, for consideration by the World Heritage Committee, before detailed technical and financial feasibility studies are undertaken..

Acknowledging this request, the Government of Afghanistan and the UNESCO began planning for the Tokyo Symposium, to be held in September 2017. The Symposium will provide an opportunity for technical experts to present proposals for revitalizing the Eastern Buddha statue. Proposals are invited for physical and non-physical reconstruction to ensure a balanced range of options is presented at the Symposium. Proposals will be pre-screened by a designated scientific committee before they are presented at the Symposium to ensure compliance with WHC guidelines and conservation best-practice. The selected proposal(s) will be sent to the WHC and its ABs for their review.

Western Buddha niche:

As noted above, a detailed condition assessment has been conducted on the rear wall of the Western Buddha niche, which will form the basis of future planning of stabilization work. A full-height scaffolding structure will be completed in 2017 to allow conservators to reach the rear wall and ceiling of the niche.

Shari Gholgholah:

Consolidation of some parts of Shahr-i-Gholghola at the south side such as walls and domical chambers was implemented in 2015 with cooperation, 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 2017 onwards with support from the UNESCO and other international community.

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 mud brick 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. If this project can continue from 2016 to 2017 to conserve many more buildings, it will hopefully meet the conditions to remove the site from immediate danger.

Shahr-i Zuhak

No work has been conducted in 2016.

Kakrak Valley

No work has been conducted in 2016.

Qoul-I Akram Caves in the Foladi Valley

No work has been conducted in 2016.

Kala-I Ghami

No work has been conducted in 2016.

Qalla-I Kaphari A

No work has been conducted in 2016.

Qalla-I Kaphari B

No work has been conducted in 2016.

Bamiyan Cultural Centre:

The construction of the Bamiyan Cultural Centre was initiated in June 2016. Funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the launching event was attended by H.E. Chin Ki Hoon, the Korean Ambassador, H.E. Sadat Mansoor Naderi, the Minister of Urban Development and Housing and H.E. Tahir Zuhair, the Governor of Bamiyan. The Cultural Centre will provide a creative hub for Bamiyan's vibrant cultural scene, with a music room, viewing galleries and lecture theatres.

In December 2016, the Government of the Republic of Korea committed a further \$1.9m for Phase II of the Bamiyan Cultural Centre, providing critical funding to continue building operations until 2018.

c) Difficulties in implementing corrective measures.

The Government of Afghanistan does not have enough financial resources to implement conservation activities on each of the historic sites simultaneously and requires the continued assistance from UNESCO and the international community to address these issues.

Many parts of the site within and outside the boundaries face increasing urban pressures from the re-settlement of people within the valley. In particular, private land claims are being made at the foot of the Buddha cliff, which has caused protracted delays on site planning.

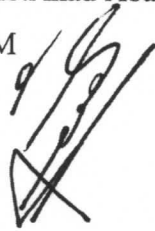
Much of the vernacular architecture, traditional land use, canal and irrigation systems that make up the contemporary cultural landscape lie outside the present boundaries of the site and is under increasing pressure for development and urban growth.

There is also the potential for mining in the nearby mountains of Bamiyan Province which could catalyse further population growth 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.

It requires modification of the boundary inscribed on the World Heritage List to include values of cultural landscapes. Hence re-examination of heritage value at Bamiyan will be needed. Modification of the country's legal management system and control mechanisms are also necessary to ensure the permanent protection of the Bamiyan WH site value.

Best Regards,

Depl. Architect Ab.Ahad Abassi
Director of DoHM



Mohammad Rasul Bawari
Deputy Minister for Culture

