



National Commission for Museums and Monuments

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(OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL)

A REPORT ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION AS AT NOVEMBER, 2017

Name of property: Sukur Cultural Landscape

State Party: Nigeria

Identification number: 938

1. Executive Summary

The state party acknowledges the decision taken at the 40th session of World Heritage Committee at Istanbul and appropriately accepted the invitation to submit request for international assistance for restoration, repair and replacement of the effected properties on the cultural landscape as a result of insurgent attack of December 2014. A grant of 19,867 USD was approved by UNESCO in October 2017 but as at the time of writing this report the money has not been credited to the State Party account yet so the project which is expected to terminate by the end of 2017 has not yet commenced. The state party has also proposed for a reactive monitoring team to visit between 21st to 25th of January, 2018 after undertaking the restoration work.

The prevailing activities on the landscape does not pose any serious threat that may have negative impact on the attributes conveying outstanding universal value of the site despite the increasing number of people that relocated to the uphill due to the threats of occasional attacks of the Boko Haram insurgents on the plains. Beside the general restoration of individual homesteads and communal features, an initiative by a World Heritage Volunteer organization (WHV) 2017 constructed three native chalets at Sukur hilltop under the supervision of the Site Manager with a view to provide accommodation to visitors and researchers at the site. The project was undertaken by a registered local based Non-Governmental Organization known as Grassroots Lifesaving Outreach from 17th - 30th May, 2017, using local volunteers from Sukur.

Professor Nicholas David of Calgary University with his team have also succeeded in nominating Sukur on the World Monuments Fund's 2018 Watch List. It means another window of opportunity has opened to generate resources for some identified project plans which include inventory and community mapping of cultural features; training of local community in local crafts and as tour operators; improvement of festivals; conservation and restoration of paved stone ways.

2. Response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee

On the security situation in the North Eastern Nigeria and the attack of the Cultural Landscape on the 12th December, 2014, the State Party has appreciated the deep concern of the World Heritage Committee. And as earlier report indicated, the effort to weaken the insurgents and end insurgency in the region by the Nigerian military, other security agencies and the local vigilante and other NGO's continues to record positive results. As at now Sukur cultural landscape is not under any imminent threat from this quarter and infact, the residents of the plains now consider Sukur hilltop as a safe haven against the attacks of the Boko Haram insurgents.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by State Party which may have an impact on the property's outstanding universal value (OUV)

However, it has been observed that due to environmental and human factors the degradation of the environment is causing scarcity of local materials like the grasses for local thatch roofs and depleting vegetation is advancing erosion. While this may not pose an immediate threat to the OUV of the properties now, it can influence changes and adaptations such as resort to the use of iron zinc and cement on buildings. In view of these observations a strategy such risk preparedness and mitigation measures are considered in the new updated 2017- 2021 Management Plan.

4. In conformity with operational guidelines, potential major restorations and constructions in the core area or buffer zone that may likely to affect the property's Outstanding Universal Value including authenticity and integrity

There is no major construction or development underway which may have negative impact on the attributes conveying outstanding universal value of the

site. However, there is a record of people relocating to the hilltop and building new houses. In view of the preference of new comers to construct their houses with cement and zinc roofs, the vernacular architecture of the landscape may now be diluted. This preference for using zinc is also caused by the scarcity of local grass suitable for good thatch roofing due to climatic changes and the increasing use of pesticides which effects the growth of grasses. One recent project that took place at the site was From 17th - 30th May, 2017, by a World Heritage Volunteer organization (WHV) 2017 which is a local based Non-Governmental Organization known as Grassroots Lifesaving Outreach (GLO) headed by James Tizhe Sigg. The organization constructed three native chalets as eco-lodges at Sukur hilltop under the supervision of the Site Manager with a view to provide accommodation to visitors and researchers at the site.

In conformity with the operational guidelines, all new developments and restoration works including the one scheduled to commence under the UNESCO international assistance are meant to sustain attributes of Outstanding Universal Values. The proposed areas that will be covered include structures in the Hidi's palace, the palace square and sacred places in order to maintain authenticity and integrity of the landscape as well as the interpretation center and the gallery that will continue to provide management, educational and social services.

Professor Nicholas David together with Judy Sterner of the Dept of Archaeology University of Calgary, have had long history of research and community development interest on Sukur and the other montagnard communities of the Mandara Mountains. They have recently secured a prestigious place for Sukur on the World Monument Fund's 2018 watch list which opens a new window of opportunity for resources and interest that can champion projects on site conservation and development. The watchlist nomination document for Sukur was presented with the following proposed Action Plans:-

- 1) A project designed to carry out the first part of an inventory and community mapping of cultural features in the designated WH cultural landscape and those wards of Sukur located adjacent to it on the Sukur plateau.
- 2) In consultation with Hidi in Council, a series of guided tours around the World Heritage will be elaborated, documented, booklets designed and instructions for guides prepared.

3) Selection of candidates for site warden training and raising of the requisite funds.

4) Sukur is known for, amongst other crafts, its basketry, costumery and especially ironworking. In collaboration with the traditional authorities and the NCMM, artisans will be identified and provisional arrangements made for sales of their wares to tourists and merchants.

5) The Yawal festival, held in February, in part on the mountain and in part on the plain below, has become annual since inscription on the World Heritage list.

6) Paved ways (*civi mungan*), and particularly the northern paved way, are unique to and emblematic of Sukur. The northern paved way is the most intensively used and we have records of its degradation and erosion in places going back to 1992 and significantly worse by 2008.

5. **Public access to the state of conservation report**

For public access to the state of conservation report, the State Party does not have any objection.

6. **Signature of the Authority**

Name: Yusuf Abdallah Usman

Designation: Director General,

Organization: National Commission for Museums and Monuments:

Signatur: _____

Date: _____


27th NOVEMBER 2017