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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/2008/C 1293

Paris, 18 January 2008

H. E. Mr Ziad Bin Abdullah Aldrees
Ambassador
Permanent Delegation of Saudi Arabia to
UNESCO
Maison de l'UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15

Subject: World Heritage List 2008 – Nomination of “Al_Hijr Archaeological Site (Madâin Sâlih)” – Saudi Arabia

Dear Sir,

ICOMOS is currently assessing the nomination of “Al_Hijr Archaeological Site (Madâin Sâlih)” as a World Heritage site and we thank you for your assistance with the recent Mission to the property.

Following the meeting of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel, several issues have been identified for which ICOMOS needs additional information:

1. Provide a timeframe for the adoption of the new *Draft Antiquities and Museums Law*.
2. Provide a timeframe for the completion and implementation of the management plan.

We would be grateful if you could provide ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre with the above information by **28 February 2008**.

We thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Yours faithfully



Regina Durighello
Director
World Heritage Unit
ICOMOS

Copy to Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science
Dr Hussein Abu Al-Hassan, Supreme Commission for Tourism
Mr Naef Raji al-Anazi, Department of Antiquities and Museums
UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris



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Ref. ICOMOS Letter 17/01/08
6 February, 2008

Ms. Regina Durighello
Director of the World Heritage
ICOMOS
Telephone: +33 (0)1 45 67 67 70
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Dear. Ms. Durighello,

Thank you for your letter dated 18th January 2008 regarding the nomination of Al-Hijr Archaeological Site (Madain Saleh).

We would like to clarify that the current Saudi Antiquities Law assures the full protection of archaeological sites in the Kingdom. The new Antiquities Law under review, while greatly upgrading the national legislation, will not bring about substantial modification as far as archaeological sites are concerned, and I am glad to inform you that acquisition process of department of Antiquities with SCT is done, which will reflect an improvement on speeding up the process of approval of the new law.

Since the submission of the Nomination Document to UNESCO World Heritage Secretariat in January 2007, SCT efforts have led to a series of administrative steps to implement the recommendations and decisions presented in the File.

- The limits of the new Buffer Zone have been officially approved by the municipality of Alula on 3 Oct, 2007 - attached - (the final approval at the central government level is on process);
- A site manager has been nominated. (attached)

Furthermore, restoration works have started on the Hijaz Railway buildings and road works on the internal circuit have been implemented according to the principles defined in the Nomination Document.



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As far as the first point raised in your letter is concerned, SCT cannot unfortunately answer straightforwardly as the legal item implies a number of steps whose duration can only be estimated on the basis of previous experiences but cannot be known in advance.

To clarify this point, SCT would like to briefly remind the official procedure involved in the approval of the new Antiquity Law:

- 1) On November 2006, the new Antiquity Law has been submitted to the Diwan Majlis al Wuzara (Council of Ministries). The Council of Ministries has sought the advice of an ad hoc "The Ministerial Committee for Administrative Organizing" that has already reviewed the proposal and sent it back to the Council of Ministries.
- 2) Following this phases, the Council of Ministries has transmitted the text to the Bureau of Experts (Hayat al Khubara) which is currently in the process of reviewing the text (the Bureau of Experts is supposed to complete the revision by the end of 2008).
- 3) Once approved by the Bureau of Experts, the proposal will be sent to the Shura Council (Majlis al Shura) for preliminary approval.
- 4) The Shura Council will then transmit its remarks to the Council of Ministries that is meant to approve officially the law, and the eventual amendments proposed by the Bureau of Experts and the Shura Council.

The official (Final) approval of the new Antiquity Law presented in the Nomination Document is expected to take place in 2009.

Concerning the second point raised in your letter, SCT is glad to inform you that a comprehensive Management Plan, meant to develop and complete the document submitted to UNESCO Secretariat in February 2007, has been elaborated and approved. The Management Plan details the characteristics of the new administrative system in charge of the site.



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According to the plan, a Site Manager for Al Hijr Archaeological Site (Mâdain Sâleh) has been nominated in December 2007 and the new site management unit foreseen in the plan has begun to be established.

Copy of Al Hijr Archaeological Site (Mâdain Sâleh) Management Plan, and the translation of the administrative acts that establish the new management system, are joined to this letter.

SCT will be honored to transmit you, via the Saudi Delegation at UNESCO, the additional documents requested by February 21st, 2008.

Sincerely,

Prof. Ali Ibrahim Al-Ghabban
Deputy Secretary General for Antiquities and Museums
The Supreme Commission for Tourism
Riyadh - Saudi Arabia

(Translation of first attachment)

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Municipal & Ruler Affairs
Al-Madinah Al-Mounawarah Province Municipality
Al-Ula Governorate Municipality

Urban Planning

Your Excellency the Executive Manager of Al-Maddinah PTO

Greetings,

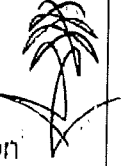
In reference to your letter No. (654) dated 30/12/1428H (9/1/2008), regarding the addressed letter of HRH the Secretary General of the Supreme Commission for Tourism No. (2/488) dated 6/2/1428H (24/2/2007) to HE the Mayor of Maddinah Province concerning the approval of the protected buffer zone surrounding Al-Hijr (Madain Saleh) site at Al-Ula, in which you request an update on the actions taken in this regard.

We would like to inform you that the buffer zone was identified on ground and that we have submitted our letter No. (195/m/s) dated 21/9/1428H (6/10/2007) to HE the Head of Municipalities and Rural complexes at the provincial Municipality (of Al-Madinah) to enforce the approval of the site and its buffer zone according to SCT request.

For your information.

For your Excellency's reference,

Head Greetings of the Municipality of Al-Ula
Mr. Salamah Bin Salman Al Luheibi
19/1/1429 (28/1/2008)



No. : 619
Date : 4/2/1429H (11/2/2008)

Supreme Commission
for Tourism.
General Secretary
Antiquity & Museum Sector

(Translation of second attachment)

Administrative Resolution

Upon the approval of His Royal Highness the Secretary General of the Supreme Commission for Tourism for assigning a manager for Al-Hijr Archeological Site (Madain Saleh), we state the following:

- Assigning Mr. Naif bin Raji Al-Anazi as the Manager of Al-Hijr Archeological Site (Madain Saleh)
- This resolution shall be notified to all related parties
- This resolution shall overwrite all resolutions issued in this regard.

Deputy Secretary General for Antiquities & Museums

Prof. Ali I. Ghabban