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 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
 Ministry of Culture & Tourism
 Authority for Research & Conservation of
 Cultural Heritage



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 Ref.No 01/14-1/019
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 Date 31 JAN 2019

Dr. Mechtild Rössler
 Director World Heritage Center
 7, Place de Fontevry
 75352 Paris 07SP
 France

Subject: - Progress report to the Aksum and Lower Omo Valley World Heritage properties

Dear Dr. Mechtild,

I would like to recall the World Heritage Committee Decisions during its 42 regular session in 2018, Decision 42 COM 7B.43 Aksum and Decision 42 COM 7B.44 Lower Valley of the Omo, where the State Party is required to submit progress report on selected issues of both properties.

With regards to the Aksum world heritage property, the committee requires a progress report related to the revised management plan of the property and to show the relationship of the management plan with the Thematic Master Plan (2010) of Aksum and submit both documents to World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

In relation to the Lower Omo Valley world heritage property, the Committee raised the status of the EU funded project with the regards to the management plan and boundary delineation of the property. The Committee further requests to submit a progress report and continue to give priority for other issues related to the property.

Therefore the State Party would like to submit the progress reports of the Aksum and the Lower Omo Valley world heritage properties, enclosed to this letter for consideration by the world heritage committee. Taking this opportunity the State Party would like to thank the World Heritage Center for its continued collaboration to implement the world heritage convention (1972).



With best regards,

[Signature]
 Yonas Desta
 Director General

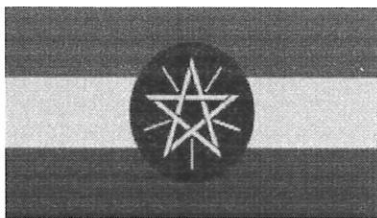
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Progress report of the Aksum world heritage property



GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

Name of World Heritage property (State(s) Party (ies)) (Identification number)

AKSUM (Ethiopia)

Property ID C 15

Date of Inscription: 1980

Criteria (i) and (iv)

1. Executive Summary of the report

This progress report is submitted in response to the World Heritage Committee **Decision (42 COM 7B.43)** in its 42nd regular session (Manama, 2018), which requests the State Party to update the committee on the undergoing activities of the Aksum world heritage property. The report has also considered the letter from the World Heritage Centre (Ref. CLT/HER^VHC/196) dated on 27 July 2018, which reminds the State Party previous decisions acknowledged by the World Heritage Committee.

Therefore this progress report contains the summary of outstanding topics related the management and conservation of the Aksum world heritage property. The progress report is submitted for considerations by the World Heritage Committee at its 43rd Session to be held in 2019. The progress report further contains updates on the Aksum Stelae III Consolidation project and other documents that comprise the revised management plan and Thematic Master Plan of Aksum, all enclosed to this report for further review.

Progress report of the Aksum world heritage property

2. Response of the State Party to the World Heritage Committee

With regards to the Aksum world heritage property, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to submit a progress report on particular topics. The topics include the revision of the Management Plan, submitting the Thematic Master Plan (2010) and Structural Plan of (2016) of Aksum to World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. Furthermore the Committee requests the State Party to show the relationship between the management plan and the Thematic Master Plan of Aksum.

2.1 Management system of the property

2.1.1 Aksum Site Management Plan

The management plan of the Aksum world heritage property was developed in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, importantly with the Aksum University and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. The plan was finalized after the validation workshop organized in June 2016. The management plan was then submitted to the World Heritage Centre in 2017 for technical evaluation. Accordingly, the State Party has received the results of detailed technical review from ICOMOS in June 2018. Based on the comments, the management plan has critically been revised to incorporate all concerns raised in the Technical Review of ICOMOS. The revision process was undertaken to clearly show the plan's relationship with the Thematic Master Plan (2010) of Aksum.

The Thematic Master Plan has identified tourist products in Aksum and its environs and proposed as to how the identified products could be developed in the future. Therefore the management plan considers the visitor management and site interpretation activities, which were already included in the Thematic Master Plan of Aksum, to implement them during the life time of the plan. In compliance with the technical review results, the management plan was revised to accommodate all issues mentioned by ICOMOS and some missing elements along with international and national laws required for the effective management and protection of the Aksum world heritage property.

2.1.2 Site management office

Derived from the antiquity law of Ethiopia, proclamation 209/2000, Article 42, the government gazetted the *Aksum World Heritage Reserve Area Designation Council of Ministers Regulation* No. 346/2015. The regulation mandated the Authority to establish an office at the site level, which facilitates the creation of a formal management structure to guide, monitor and implement field-based operations and actions. Accordingly a management team composed of some staff that includes a field-based Site Manager (SM), a conservation specialist and of an interpretation officer was set up in 2018. In the longer term, the office will also include other competencies and expertise in the future.

Progress report of the Aksum world heritage property

2.1.3 Advisory Committee

The regulation No. 346/2015 has established an Advisory Committee, which is to meet once every three months, chaired by the Mayor of the Aksum. The Advisory Committee is the local organ, which will report directly to the head office, ARCCH through the Site Manager. Therefore the new site management structure consists of a wide range of stakeholders from civic administration, academia, civil society groupings, religious institutions, tourism industries and the ARCCH site manager. The Advisory Committee will, amongst others, assess development proposals in the property buffer zone, as gazetted. This Advisory Committee became operational and is working accordingly since May 2018.

2.1.4 Boundary Delineation

The Regulation (No 346/2015) has also established the state cadastre of the nominated area and its buffer zone, which contains a set of GPS coordinate points marking the boundary of the property. Accordingly the State Party is working towards the creation of the cadastre system concerning the cadastre maps of the property and its implementation. The implementation work on the preparation of cadastre system is connected with the preservation of the monumental, architectural, archaeological and spiritual elements of the property. The government institution, in charge of the cadastre registration, the Ethiopian Geo-special and Information Agency, has been engaged to finalize the cadaster maps of the property in 2019.

3. Stele III Consolidation Project Initiative

With regards to the Consolidation of Stele III Project, the local contractor MH Engineering and the Italian company Studio Croci & Associati have already developed submitted the revised working documents of the project. The revised working documents were submitted to the State Party and ARCCH has transmitted all the revised working documents to the World Heritage Centre in June 2018 for review by the advisory bodies. In response, the State Party has received the results of ICOMOS technical review on the submitted working documents on 24 January 2019. Consequently, the State Party has despatched the results of the technical review of ICOMOS to the contractors for considerations in the implementation phase of the project.

4. Signature of the Authority

Name Yonas Desta

Signature 

Date _____

