

State of Conservation Report

For the

Maloti–Drakensberg Park  
World Heritage Site

Lesotho and South Africa

Submitted

by the Governments of the Kingdom of Lesotho and Republic of South Africa

July 2020



**PART I – IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY**

Name of property: Maloti–Drakensberg Park 985 BIS

State Party and Province: Lesotho, Qacha's nek District

State Party and Province: South Africa, KwaZulu- Natal Province

Criteria: (i)(iii)(vii) and (x)

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

This is the State of Conservation Report in response to Decision: 43 COM 7B.38 for Maloti-Drakensberg Park (Lesotho, South Africa) (C/N 985bis).

The Decision also recalls previous Decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee, namely, 37 COM 8B.18, 39 COM 7B.33 and 41 COM 7B.38 whose progress is also captured in the report.

The State Parties are awaiting a technical review by the Advisory Bodies, following completion and submission of the management plans for fire, invasive alien species, cultural heritage as well as the sustainable tourism strategy.

The State Parties are still in the process of finalising the revision of the Joint Management Plan of the property which will be used as an umbrella to harmonize the management system.

The State Party of South Africa has established the new buffer zone for the property in South Africa, south of the Sehlabathebe National Park, and also submitted a request for a minor boundary modification in line with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines.

The States Parties confirm and commit to limiting any conservation interventions only to addressing immediate and urgent vulnerability of rock art sites in accordance with the moratorium on non-urgent conservation interventions.

South Africa previously reported development of draft terms of reference for an environmental impact assessment and a heritage impact assessment in line with the IUCN's World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment and the ICOMOS' Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessment for Cultural World Heritage Properties. The impact studies are still to be carried out, as no formal application for development has been submitted yet.

The States Parties will ensure that risk preparedness and disaster response planning is incorporated in the joint management plan of the property.

The draft Biodiversity Conservation Bill being developed by the State Party of Lesotho is still to be finalised.

The two States Parties are not aware of any proposals or applications for major restorations, alterations and constructions within the property or its buffer zone which may

affect the Outstanding Universal Value.

## **2. RESPONSE TO THE DECISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

- 2.1 *Commends the States Parties on their efforts to improve the management of the property, in particular its cultural values, to invest in staff training and activities to strengthen the engagement of communities in conservation, and encourages the States Parties and their partners to sustain their technical and financial support for these efforts;***

The States Parties are committed to, as part of their own national legislative requirements, continue providing annual budgets for the management of the site, including budgetary allocations for training as well as community activities. UNESCO has also approved a budget of about US\$0.145million for the implementation of the Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation Programme (COMPACT) for communities around the site, of which the site is benefiting from.

- 2.2 *Reiterates its request to the States Parties to complete the revision of the Joint Management Plan of the property, using it as an umbrella to harmonize the management system, to submit the Plan to the World Heritage Centre for review, and to report on its implementation;***

The State Parties are still in the process of finalising the revision of the Joint Management Plan of the property which will be used as an umbrella to harmonize the management system. The plan will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre as soon as it is finalised.

- 2.3 *Also notes the completion of the process towards establishing a new buffer zone for the property in South Africa, south of the Sehlabathebe National Park, and also requests the States Parties to formalize the buffer zone as soon as possible through a request for minor boundary modification in line with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines;***

The State Party of South Africa has established the new buffer zone for the property in South Africa, south of the Sehlabathebe National Park, and also submitted, in February 2020, a request for a minor boundary modification in line with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines,

- 2.4 ***Acknowledges the preparation of the cultural heritage implementation programme 2019-2022 for Sehlabathebe National Park, and further requests the States Parties to address the immediate vulnerability of the rock art sites, but await the approval by ICOMOS and authorized rock art conservators of conservation interventions, in accordance with the moratorium on non-urgent conservation interventions;***

The States Parties confirm and commit to limiting any conservation interventions only to addressing immediate and urgent vulnerability of rock art sites in accordance with the moratorium on non-urgent conservation interventions.

- 2.5 ***Notes with concern the proposed shale gas, gas and oil exploration within the property's newly proposed buffer zone in South Africa, which may have negative impacts on the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and requests furthermore the State Party of South Africa to submit to the World Heritage Centre an Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment for these projects, including a specific assessment of the impacts on OUV, in line with IUCN and ICOMOS guidance, before taking any decision that may be difficult to reverse, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines***

The state party of South Africa confirms that no developments have taken place yet on the proposed exploration sites. The State Party further commits itself to submit the reports on the Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments as well as on specific assessments of the impacts on OUV as soon as the formal application for exploration is received and the assessments have been completed.

- 2.6 ***Further notes the concerns and the appeal lodged by the site management authority over the proposed petrol filling station within the property's buffer zone in South Africa, and requests moreover the State Party of South Africa to address these concerns and report on follow up;***

The state party of South Africa has already advised the World Heritage Committee that the site management authority's appeal was rejected by the provincial government and the proposed development was initiated and has now been completed.

- 2.7 ***Takes note of the State Party of South Africa's reiterated commitment to undertake an Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed cableway in South Africa, and to not make any decisions before these assessments are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;***

The state party of South Africa notes that there has been no further developments since the last reporting period and commits itself to submit the Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment reports to the World Heritage Centre as soon as the application for development is received and the assessments have been completed.

- 2.8 ***Also reiterates its request to the State Party of Lesotho to expedite the finalization of the Biodiversity Resources Management Bill and to submit a copy to the World Heritage Centre;***

The state party of Lesotho commits to expedite the finalisation of the Biodiversity Management Bill, the draft of which is currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture to incorporate final comments

3. **Other current conservation issues identified by the State Parties which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value**

The States Parties are not aware of any conservation issues which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

4. **In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new constructions intended within the property, the buffer zone, and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property including authenticity and integrity.**

The States Parties are not aware of any proposal or applications of major restorations, alterations and constructions within the property or buffer zone which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

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

The States Parties agree to the full State of Conservation report being uploaded for public access.

**6. Signature of the Authority**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be a stylized name or set of initials, possibly 'M. J. D.', written in a cursive or semi-cursive style.

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