

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

> Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

# **World Heritage**

**44 COM** 

# WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add.2

Paris, 12 July 2021 Original: English / French

# UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

# CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

**WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE** 

**Extended forty-fourth session** 

Fuzhou (China) / Online meeting 16-31 July 2021

<u>Item 7B of the Provisional Agenda</u>: State of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List

#### **SUMMARY**

This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Committee is requested to review the reports on the state of conservation of properties contained in this document. The full reports of Reactive Monitoring missions requested by the World Heritage Committee are available at the following Web address in their original language: http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/44COM/documents

All previous state of conservation reports will also be available through the World Heritage State of conservation Information System at the following Web address: http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc

<u>Decision required</u>: The World Heritage Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision presented at the end of each state of conservation report.

# **Table of content**

I.	REPORTS ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST INITIALLY FORESEEN TO BE EXAMINED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE IN 2020	RLD
CU	.TURAL PROPERTIES	2
4	SIA-PA CIFIC	2
	30. Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mir (Japan) (C 1484)	
II.	REPORTS ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON 1 WORLD HERITAGE LIST INITIALLY FORESEEN TO BE EXAMINED BY THE WOF HERITAGE COMMITTEE IN 2021	RLD
CU	TURAL PROPERTIES	8
4	RAB STATES	8
	135. Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem (Palest (C 1433)	

I. REPORTS ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST INITIALLY FORESEEN TO BE EXAMINED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE IN 2020

# **CULTURAL PROPERTIES**

#### **ASIA-PACIFIC**

30. Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining (Japan) (C 1484)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2015

Criteria (ii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/documents/

#### International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/assistance/

## UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

# Previous monitoring missions

N/A

#### Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Ground transport infrastructure (Road construction projects at Shuseikan and Mietsu Naval Dock)
- Human resources (Need for capacity building on the OUV of the property, industrial heritage and interpretation)
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation (Visitor levels)
- Management systems / Management Plan (Need to develop a prioritised conservation work
  programme for the property and its component sites and an implementation programme; Lack of a
  detailed conservation work programme for Hashima Island (issue resolved))
- Marine transport infrastructure (New anchorage facility at Miike Port)
- Interpretative and visitation facilities (Lack of an adequate interpretive strategy for the presentation of the property)

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/">http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/</a>

#### Current conservation issues

On 29 November 2019, the Japanese authorities submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, prepared jointly by the Cabinet Secretariat, local governments, component part owners and other stakeholders, and approved by the National Committee of Conservation and Management for the property. This report is available at <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/documents/">http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/documents/</a> and responds to the Committee's previous decisions as follows:

 Regarding conservation of the Hashima Coal Mine, surveys were undertaken, and the resulting data compiled to inform an Action Plan for the next 10 years. In addition to building surveys, Nagasaki City undertook archaeological surveys and record surveys and will continue this ongoing work. Scientific exploratory committees and other bodies have been set up, drawing on expert knowledge to discuss conservation methods based on research results. Nagasaki City intends to undertake further research and conservation work on a systematic basis;

- A visitor management strategy has been created, based on the results of quantitative and qualitative surveys undertaken over the last three years. According to these surveys, the prevention of adverse impacts from the constant fluctuation in visitor numbers does not require static control (i.e. thresholds for daily/annual numbers of visitors), but rather multiple indicators to confirm the fluctuations in visitor numbers, followed by appropriate responses;
- An Interpretation Audit was conducted at all areas by international specialists in March and August 2019 and took into consideration the Interpretative Strategy submitted as part of the State Party's 2017 report. Interpretation at each visitor centre will be developed with a focus on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), e.g. by introducing the common exhibits for overall property indicated by the Cabinet Secretariat;
- Regular discussions were organised between some parties concerned with the Sites of Japan's
  Meiji Industrial Revolution: the relevant ministries, local government, component site owners, and
  managers, as well as with Japanese and international experts, local communities, and tourism
  operators. Discussion also took place in councils comprising local government, chambers of
  commerce and Industry, and tourism associations;
- Training guidelines have been set for each category of personnel at each area and component site, and capacity-building projects were implemented accordingly. The publications 'Understanding Steel' and 'Understanding Coal' were created to improve the general understanding of the history of each industry, as a capacity-building tool for personnel engaged in permanent interpretation work on site. Similar materials for the shipbuilding industry are planned, along with guide training;
- The State Party shared details on several development projects that may affect the property as part of the report. It indicates that studies, reports and/or Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) are in preparation for a new road construction at Shuseikan, the Mietsu Naval Dock road bridge, and a new anchorage facility at Miike Port, and that these will be shared in due time;
- The State Party also reported on a number of other projects that were already evoked in its 2017 report, notably concerning components sites in the Hagi, Kagosihma, Saga and Yawata areas;
- On 6 September 2019, in line with the Strategic Framework for the property, the Cabinet Secretariat held a meeting of the Industrial Heritage Expert Committee, composed of Japanese and international specialists, to gather the opinions of experts, which were reflected in the submitted report.

A meeting was held between the World Heritage Centre and the Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO on 19 June 2020, during which the activities in response to Decision **42 COM 7B.10**, paragraph 10 were discussed, in which the Committee encouraged 'continuing dialogue between the concerned parties'. As a follow-up to this meeting, the World Heritage Centre received, on 24 June, a list of about 9 dialogue meetings and consultations held between the State Party and representatives of the Republic of Korea after the decision made in 2018 mentioned above.

An Industrial Heritage Information Center (IHIC) was established in Tokyo on 31 March 2020 but had to be closed immediately due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the State Party, the IHIC reopened on 15 June 2020. During the aforementioned meeting on 19 June 2020, the World Heritage Centre requested further information from the State Party on the contents of the Information Center, especially with regard to 'the interpretive strategy for the presentation of the property, which gives particular emphasis to the way each of the sites contributes to Outstanding Universal Value and reflects one or more of the phases of industrialisation; and also allows an understanding of the full history of each site" (Decision 39 COM 8B.14, Paragraph 4.g).

In the absence of further information on this matter, the World Heritage Centre wrote a letter to the Japanese authorities on 22 September 2020, reiterating the Committee's request for "an update on the overall interpretation of the Information Center upon its completion." (Decision **42 COM 7B.10**, paragraph 8).

On 30 November 2020, the World Heritage Centre received a Report on the Implementation Status of the Interpretation Strategy, which is also available at the link above (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/documents/). The State Party reports the following:

- The Government of Japan established the IHIC on 31 March 2020, but temporarily closed it to
  prevent the spread of COVID-19. It was then reopened to the public on 15 June 2020.
  Explanations of exhibits at the visitor centres in each component site are made in coordination
  with IHIC;
- Concerning the Committee's request to reflect the "full history" of each site, Japan indicates that
  descriptions and interpretations of the "full history" of each component site are planned at the
  IHIC, making use of an immersive multi-display, and in line with the Interpretative Strategy. While
  paying attention to the advice of domestic and international specialists, the IHIC will continue to
  work with each visitor centre in considering how to present the "full history";
- Concerning the history of workers, including "former civilian workers from the Korean Peninsula
  and others", the State Party of Japan indicates that it conducted investigations of industrial labour
  at work sites during the World War II and collected information, focusing mainly on primary
  sources ("laws, official notices, public documents and documents of related organizations and
  corporations") that "enable visitors to understand recruitment, official placement, requisition, and
  repatriation and testimonies". Japan plans to expand on this work in the future;
- Japan also established a certification programme for interpretation to ensure consistency in interpretation at all component sites, and training sessions were held for staff and volunteer guides and further training activities are planned. On-site and online interpretation, including through virtual visits and 3D digital reconstruction have been prepared to make the experience "more immersive". Finally, the World Heritage Route Promotion Council prepared maps and applications, GPS navigation and road signs to guide visitors to all component parts and related sites.

It was subsequently agreed that a UNESCO/ICOMOS Mission to the property should visit the Industrial Heritage Information Center (IHIC), review its contents and provide feedback on their compliance with previous decisions of the Committee and the commitments made by the State Party at the time of inscription. Preparations for this mission were delayed due to various restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the mission eventually took place from 7 to 9 June 2021. Beforehand, the mission team already carried out a number of online consultation meetings, including with Japanese experts and other stakeholders. The mission report is available at <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/documents/">http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/documents/</a> and a summary of the mission's conclusions can be found in the Analysis section below.

It should be noted that, throughout the preparation of the present document, the World Heritage Centre has continued to receive numerous messages expressing strong concerns about the contents of the Industrial Heritage Information Center and the implementation of the Committee's previous decisions, including from high-level representatives of the Republic of Korea and from various NGOs.

Regarding the development of a new train station in the buffer zone of the Shuseikan component site, the State Party provided a report to the World Heritage Centre on 17 December 2020. On 24 March 2021, the State Party provided additional information on the projects at the property such as the Update on Plans for an Anchorage Facility at Miike Coal Mine and Miike Port component site; the State Party reported that it decided not to proceed with the plan to build an anchorage facility at Miike. In response to a letter from the World Heritage Centre dated 6 April 2021, the Japanese authorities provided further information on 30 April 2021 concerning the development of a new train station in the buffer zone of the Shuseikan component site, which is currently under review by the Advisory Bodies. The Japanese authorities indicated that they would continue to provide information regarding any progress with this project.

#### Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

A detailed conservation work programme was requested for Hashima Island at the time of inscription due to the poor state of conservation of this component site. A 30-year Conservation Plan was submitted by the State Party in 2018, which envisaged three 10-year phases, for which Action Plans would be developed by Nagasaki City. In this regard, the ongoing and concluded surveys are welcome, as is the first 10-year action plan. It is regrettable, however, that this plan was not submitted to the World Heritage Centre in advance of its approval, as requested by the Committee. It is noted that the advice of the

Advisory Bodies has not been requested in the development of these priority conservation measures, as also recommended by the Committee at the time of inscription in Decision **39 COM 8B.14**.

Visitor numbers for each component site have been monitored since 2016, and it is noted that a visitor management strategy, including carrying capacities, was formulated in 2019 on the basis of these results. The Committee may regret that this strategy was not submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its adoption, despite its earlier request, and may wish to encourage the authorities to re-examine its outcomes in the light of the relevant COVID-19 regulations.

An 'interpretive strategy for the presentation of the property' was requested by the Committee to allow for an understanding of the 'full history' of each component site (see Decision **39 COM 8B.14**). Following an 'audit by international experts' in 2017, an Interpretative Strategy was developed in 2019. Under this strategy, interpretation at all sites will reflect the period of greatest contribution to OUV, i.e. 1850s-1910, while the 'full history' will include pre-1850s information at some sites and go beyond 1910 at others. In 2020 the Industrial Heritage Information Center was established in Tokyo but no information on the contents of this Center was shared with the World Heritage Centre in advance of its opening.

It should be recalled that in a statement made at the time of inscription, the State Party indicated that 'Japan is prepared to take measures that allow an understanding that there were a large number of Koreans and others who were brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions in the 1940s at some of the sites, and that, during World War II, the Government of Japan also implemented its policy of requisition. Japan is prepared to incorporate appropriate measures into the interpretive strategy to remember the victims such as the establishment of information center'. The Committee may express its concern that the establishment of the Industrial Heritage Information Center, which is not in the physical vicinity of any component site of the property, may imply that few or no materials addressing the property's 'full history' during and outside of the period of time for which the Committee has recognized its OUV are available at each component site, despite the Committee's strong encouragements towards an 'understanding of the full history of each site' at the Information Centre and through digital interpretation.

Meetings held in response to the Committee's encouragements towards 'continuing dialogue between the concerned parties' (Decision 42 COM 7B.10) are noted, in particular the meeting organised in February 2020 between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Republic of Korea, following the publication of Japan's State of Conservation report to the Committee. In response to this report, the Republic of Korea has issued several non-papers and statements, expressing strong concerns over the full interpretation of the property's history at all component sites. The Committee may therefore wish to reiterate its encouragement that continued dialogue be held with all parties involved, including international stakeholders, especially regarding questions of interpretation, and the Committee may further encourage the States Parties to use the 1972 Convention as a tool to support conservation, sustainable development, international cooperation and dialogue.

It is noted that the State Party welcomed a UNESCO/ICOMOS Mission to the Industrial Heritage Information Center in the property, which took place from 7 to 9 June 2021, and that its outcomes will be found hereunder.

# <u>Conclusions of the Report of the UNESCO/ICOMOS mission to the Industrial Heritage Information</u> Center

The mission to the Industrial Heritage Information Center in Tokyo was required by its terms of reference to consider a number of principal factors arising from the prior decisions of the Committee and the undertaking by the State Party. In relation to each of these factors, the mission's conclusions were as follows:

- Interpretive strategy showing how each site contributes to Outstanding Universal Value and allows an understanding of the full history of each site (Decision 39 COM 8B.14): The mission has concluded that the interpretation strategy as implemented at the IHIC clearly demonstrates how each site contributes to OUV, and the individual interpretation plans for each site are firmly based on a common theme. Although it is acknowledged that the history of some of the sites extends to the periods before and/or after the period covered by OUV (1850s 1910), in the opinion of the mission some aspects cannot be described as a full history because they deal only briefly if at all with the period leading up to and during the Second World War.
- Measures to allow an understanding of a large number of Koreans and others brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions, and the Japanese government's requisition policy

(Statement by Japanese delegation at the time of inscription): The requisition policy of 1944 is acknowledged and displayed in the IHIC. The previous government actions to bring large numbers of Koreans and others to work in the industrial sites was explained to the mission during the discussions but is found only in written material within the research centre. The information displayed gives the impression that conscripted workers from other countries were considered to be Japanese nationals at the time and were treated as such. The oral testimonies displayed, which were all related to Hashima Island, convey the message that there were no instances of such people being forced to work there. The mission has therefore concluded that the interpretive measures to allow an understanding of those brought against their will and forced to work are currently insufficient.

- Incorporation into the interpretive strategy of appropriate measures to remember the victims such
  as the establishment of an information center (Statement by Japanese delegation at the time of
  inscription): The information center (IHIC) has been established since 2020, and although it contains
  a variety of research material relating to the lives of workers, including oral testimonies, the mission
  has concluded that, to date, there is no display that could be characterised as adequately serving
  the purpose of remembering the victims.
- Best international practice for interpretation strategies on the interpretation of the full history of the property both during and outside the period covered by its OUV and in the digital interpretation materials (Decision 42 COM 7B.10): The mission has concluded that in relation to the full history the interpretation strategy, for the period after the OUV, falls short of international best practice, compared with other industrial heritage sites with similar histories where the practice of people being forced to work and the use of the sites for military purposes is fully acknowledged. In relation to digital interpretation materials, the mission is of the opinion that the IHIC exemplifies best international practice that could serve as a model for other World Heritage sites worldwide.
- Continuing dialogue between the concerned parties (Decision 42 COM 7B.10): The IHIC has had continuing dialogue with concerned parties including a number of people of Korean and other origin, most of whom (so the mission was informed) are now resident in Japan, and also with several invited international experts. The mission has concluded that some dialogue has taken place between the concerned State Parties, notably the Republic of Korea and Japan, because on 30 June 2021, the mission team received from WHC a document provided by the State Party of Japan listing meetings that had taken place between Japan and the Republic of Korea. Although the mission did not receive any information about the contents of these meetings, they appear to constitute a signal that a dialogue is actually continuing between these concerned parties. The mission considers that future dialogue is important and should be pursued.

In summary, the mission has concluded that while a number of aspects in the decisions of the Committee have been complied with, some in an exemplary way, and a number of the commitments by the State Party have also been met, the IHIC has not yet fully implemented the undertakings made by the State Party at the time of inscription, or the decisions of the World Heritage Committee both at the time of inscription and subsequently.

# **Draft Decision: 44 COM 7B.30**

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add.2,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **39 COM 8B.14** and **42 COM 7B.10**, adopted at its 39th (Bonn, 2015) and 42nd session (Manama, 2018) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the UNESCO/ICOMOS mission which took place in June 2021 to the Industrial Heritage Information Center (IHIC) in Tokyo;

- 4. <u>Takes note</u> with satisfaction that the State Party has met a number of its commitments and complied with a number of aspects of the Committee's relevant decisions;
- 5. <u>Strongly regrets</u> however that the State Party has not yet fully implemented the relevant decisions;
- 6. <u>Requests, in this regard,</u> the State Party to fully take into account, in the implementation of the relevant decisions, the conclusions of the mission report, which include the following topics:
  - a) Interpretive strategy showing how each site contributes to Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and allows an understanding of the full history of each site,
  - b) Measures to allow an understanding of a large number of Koreans and others brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions, and the Japanese government's requisition policy,
  - c) Incorporation into the interpretive strategy of appropriate measures to remember the victims such as the establishment of an information center,
  - d) Best international practice for interpretation strategies on the interpretation of the full history of the property both during and outside the period covered by its OUV and in the digital interpretation materials,
  - e) Continuing dialogue between the concerned parties;
- 7. <u>Further requests</u> the State party to submit by **1 December 2022** to the World Heritage Centre an updated state of conservation report of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by World Heritage Committee at its 46th session in 2023.

# II. REPORTS ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST INITIALLY FORESEEN TO BE EXAMINED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE IN 2021

# **CULTURAL PROPERTIES**

#### **ARAB STATES**

# 135. Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem (Palestine) (C 1433)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2012

Criteria (iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2012-2019

- Degradation of the architectural complex of the Church of the Nativity
- Development pressure
- Tourism pressure

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/documents/

#### International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (in 2016) Total amount approved: USD 30,000

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/assistance/

#### UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 723,000 from Italy (Emergency Action Plan 1997-1998; Conservation and Management Plan 2006-2010); USD 205,000 from the Government of Sweden for building rehabilitation

#### Previous monitoring missions

September 2016: Joint WHC/ICOMOS Advisory mission

## Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Degradation of the architectural complex of the Church of the Nativity (issue resolved)
- Development pressure
- Housing
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation
- · Management activities
- Management systems/ management plan (issue resolved)
- Tourism pressure
- Water (rain/water table)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/

## Current conservation issues

On 1 December 2020, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/documents">http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433/documents</a>. Progress in addressing a number of conservation issues identified by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in the report, as follows:

- Conservation work at the Church of Nativity has proceeded according to available funds. The
  restoration of marble tiles, stone columns, floor mosaics, and baptismal front, has been
  completed. The on-going work includes restoration of the Greek Orthodox iconostasis, and a
  survey, assessment and the development of a conservation plan for the Nativity Square;
- Based on the recommendation of the Conservation Management Plan, funds have been secured from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) for the elaboration of a risk preparedness plan for the Church of the Nativity;
- A list of remaining conservation activities has been provided, all of which are subject to fundraising:
- A Mobility Study Transport and Mobility Strategy for the Conurbation of Bethlehem has been prepared and submitted with the report;
- Rehabilitation of Star Street and its branches has taken into account the 2016 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission, and the Mobility Study, restricting vehicle access. The upgrading of existing infrastructure, such as sewage, water, storm water and lighting networks, has been undertaken at Star Street, in addition to maintenance and conservation work. Economic incentives for inhabitants and shop owners have been implemented to encourage the revival of the street. Orient Star Street, and Al-Wardieh Street were also rehabilitated, which included the construction of a tunnel close to Bethlehem University, approaching John Paul II Street;
- A "Marketing Policies and Plan" has been prepared for Star Street. It aims at reviving the street
  as a sustainable, attractive pedestrian destination, while respecting its spiritual, religious, and
  historical values;
- Other initiatives launched by the Bethlehem Municipality include:
  - "Reinventing Public Space in Bethlehem", which aims to improve the quality of public spaces in the Historic Centre,
  - Project for the installation of signage in all historical, archaeological, religious, cultural and touristic sites,
  - "3D Bethlehem", aiming to create a reliable 3D database of the Historic Centre.
  - Adaptive reuse of two buildings in the framework of the "Specialitaly Palestine" initiative, developed between Bethlehem Municipality and Italy's Comacchio Municipality,
  - An emergency health clinic is being planned, and a Public Electronic Library is expected to be launched in 2021.

The report indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant disruption, with tourism being one of the most affected sectors. Implementation of some of the initiatives has been delayed.

#### Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

In recent years, the State Party has made significant progress with conservation work of high technical standard at the Church of the Nativity, addressing the necessary corrective measures, and elaborating a Conservation Management Plan, leading to the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2019 (Decision **43 COM 7A.28**).

Progress reports have been provided about ongoing and completed work, in addition to information on planned future activities. The need to undertake further interventions to ensure the conservation of the property is noted. These comprise the restoration of the marble tiling at Bema area; structural consolidation at the two sides of the transept; installation of firefighting and microclimate control systems; restoration of the central nave stone tiling; restoration of the front yard and installation of electric hydraulic bollards; and consolidation of the Basilica external southern wall against seismic action – all of which require financial resources. It is recommended that the Committee express satisfaction for the continued high-quality conservation work and encourage the ongoing efforts to secure funding for the remaining needed interventions. The planned elaboration of a risk preparedness plan for the church is appreciated.

The "Mobility Study – Transport and Mobility Strategy for the Conurbation of Bethlehem" is a significant undertaking, which aims at arriving at a holistic approach to resolving traffic issues in the Bethlehem region, while taking into consideration cultural values and allowing for pedestrianisation.

The rehabilitation of Star Street and its branches, carried out by the State Party in line with the recommendations of the 2016 Advisory mission, is welcomed. However, details of the works have not been provided, which makes it difficult to assess their conformity with the recommendations of the ICOMOS technical review of 2019. In this regard, it is recommended that technical information on these interventions and for the unified signage strategy for cultural and touristic sites are provided.

The elaboration of Marketing Policies and Plan for Star Street is also welcomed. It would be beneficial to develop a design guide for shopfronts, as per the recommendations of the ICOMOS technical review.

Despite the prevailing situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected all aspects of life in Bethlehem, especially tourism, the State Party has made substantial efforts in continuing conservation, fundraising for several projects, and implementation of significant initiatives.

#### Draft Decision: 44 COM 7B.135

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add.2,
- 2. Recalling Decision 43 COM 7A.28, adopted at its 43rd session (Baku, 2019),
- 3. <u>Commends</u> the State Party for the continued implementation of the high-quality conservation work at the Church of the Nativity and the planning for the elaboration of a risk preparedness plan, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to pursue its efforts to secure resources for the remaining necessary interventions;
- 4. <u>Takes note</u> of the preparation by the State Party of the Mobility Study Transport and Mobility Strategy for the Conurbation of Bethlehem, and the Marketing Policies and Plan for Star Street and <u>urges</u> the State Party to implement the Mobility Strategy as soon as practicable;
- 5. <u>Welcomes</u> the rehabilitation of Star Street and its branches, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to submit additional information, specifically with regards to:
  - a) Moving the main visitor car parking adjacent to the Action Club roundabout,
  - b) Using matching materials in repairs following removal of inappropriate additions and mechanical and electrical services, based on the principle of minimum intervention,
  - c) Design guidance for shopfronts,
  - d) Avoiding uniformity in shopfront colours, and avoiding the use of billboards without further justification,
  - e) Conformity with the recommendations of the ICOMOS technical review of 2019;
- 6. <u>Also welcomes</u> the development and implementation of a unified signage strategy for cultural and tourist sites, and <u>also requests</u> the State Party to provide further information in this regard;
- 7. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2023**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above.