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World Heritage

44 COM

# AMENDMENT

Item of the Agenda	44 COM 8B.13
Amended Draft Decision	44 COM
Amendment submitted by the Delegation of....	Kyrgyzstan, Ethiopia, Oman, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Date	24/07/2021

## TEXT

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/21/44.COM/8B and WHC/21/44.COM/INF.8B1,

2. ~~Defers~~ *Inscribes* the ~~examination of the nomination of~~ **Trans-Iranian Railway, Islamic Republic of Iran**, ~~to on~~ the World Heritage List ~~in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to~~ *Considering the following suggestions and recommends:* ~~on the basis of criterion (ii) and (iv)~~

~~3. Considers that any revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site;~~

3. Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

### Brief synthesis

The 1394-km-long Trans-Iranian Railway, TIR, connects the Caspian Sea in the north to the southern shores of Iran. Opened fully in 1938, the railway is a busy main line of standard track gauge 1435 mm.

The TIR exhibits exceptional scale as a major mountain railway that rivals the best in the world. The TIR combines spectacular mountain settings with sustained steep mountain grades of 2.2% - or even 3.0%,

which is today considered the maximum practical mountain railway grade. Railways with grades steeper than 3% have proved uneconomic to operate. The TIR mountain railway design hits the critical design balance point between the outstanding and the impractical. The exceptional mountain railway scale of the TIR is also exhibited by the proliferation of major engineering structures on the route: 174 large bridges, 186 smaller bridges, and 224 tunnels, including 11 spiral tunnels. These structures are distinguished by the high quality of their 1930s construction, which has enabled them to survive to the present day in as-built condition.

The role of the railway industry in the social, economic, industrial and cultural growth of Iran and the region, as well as in international trade and transactions, is undeniable. Not only has this railway boosted the economy and trade by speeding up transportation, but also it has made possible cultural interactions and social relations with Western Asian countries and from there to Europe and beyond.

Historically, several trade routes such as the Silk Road and the Spice Route, which linked together the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, passed through Iran. As a matter of fact, the construction of the TIR in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century puts emphasis on the key role of the region in global communications in terms of cultural, commercial, social and even political relations.

It has led to the propagation of trade and the sharing of diverse rites, ceremonies and religious beliefs among various regions in the early twentieth century, especially in Western and Central Asia.

The advantage of Iran's late start was that important lessons learned about railways by other countries were applied in Iran from the outset. For example: foreign investment and control was avoided; standard gauge was adopted enabling future links to Europe; moderate gradients were specified despite the extensive mountain terrain; powerful locomotives enabled; aerial photogrammetric surveying optimized the route through rugged terrain; and some of the world's best design and construction talent was engaged. Such significant factors enabled an exceptional railway to be designed and constructed in Iran.

Following the construction of the TIR, a new style of mixed Persian-Western architecture was created which had a profound influence on the architecture of its time. Moreover, the architectural design of train stations, personnel residences, warehouses, fuel storage depots, affiliated industries and the majority of buildings along the route has been done using modern materials and following an eclectic style consisting of local and Western architecture. Consequently, this style became part of the architectural identity of each region.

Regarding its effect on social developments of the world, the TIR played a pivotal role in WWII. A part of the key negotiations took place in a TIR carriage that has been preserved up to now. This can indeed be considered as a major impact of the TIR on the global political, economical, and cultural values, which in its turn had a profound effect on world peace. Consequently, the TIR as an engineering masterpiece changed the political setting of the world in WWII and, as such, the political and cultural setting of the world for years afterwards.

Since its inauguration, the TIR has continued to play a key role in the rural and urban life of the region. At the same time, it has continued to be a crucial factor in trade and cultural transactions between the region and other near and far countries. It has served as the turning point for all-embracing developments in the region covering a wide spectrum of various economic, political, commercial, social, cultural, and later touristic aspects at a critical juncture of the contemporary history of the world.

**Criterion (ii):** The TIR serves as a living manifestation of the multi-faceted interchange of human values, modern and innovative mountain railway skills and experience for its construction, the emergence of a mixture of an Iranian-Western architectural style, as well as new structures, and boosting the economy

and trade by speeding up transportation, which led to reviving cultural-historical routes such as the Silk Road and the Spice Route at a specific period of the contemporary history in Central and Western Asia during the early 20th century and later on with the European countries.

In addition, at the time it opened, the TIR drew global acclaim for the exemplary project management achieved by the successful working relationship between the Iranian Government, the project managers and the 43 construction contractors from many countries,

Due to the mountainous landscape it proved an outstanding way of solving unexpected problems through the international breadth of experience that arose during construction, enabling the TIR project overall to stay on time and on budget. It led to new technological developments which were later on used by international experts in other parts of the world. This clearly proves the exchange of technical know-how and cultural interaction at the global level.

**Criterion (iv):** The Trans-Iranian Railway is a fine example of a technological and architectural ensemble representing major stages of long-term development of human, technical and economic activities early in the 20th century in Western Asia. It has resulted in the formation of varied landscapes in relation to the assimilation and interaction of the railway with natural landscapes on the one hand, and overcoming natural obstacles on the other hand. It has also caused a huge increase in trade, cultural and economic relations between Iran and other countries of the region; thus it has marked a significant and decisive stage in the process of the historical development of Iran, regional states and consequently other countries of the world. This paved the way for later communication and transportation with many parts of the world.

The TIR system with its various technical and architectural features is considered to be remarkable engineering feat in creativity and innovations on a wide scale, encompassing technological and architectural variety in the construction of novel and innovative architectural structures and train stations in the early twentieth century.

It symbolizes the creative usage of various technologies for gaining access to plains, highlands, forests and coastal regions at both ends of the country and linking the northern and southern shores of Iran.

The technological ensemble represents a significant stage of human history, because of its role in terminating WWII and establishing a sustainable peace via the so-called Persian Corridor.

The Trans-Iranian Railway is not only a unique museum of human creativity and endeavor, but also a technological and architectural masterpiece resulting from human ingenuity and boasting unique values.

### **Integrity**

The integrity of the Trans-Iranian Railway has been completely preserved within the proposed core zone so that it contains all the characteristics needed for the introduction of OUV.

Regarding the infrastructure, technical function and social use which show its outstanding values, it is in good condition. The integrity of the property in its setting has been well preserved concerning its physical and technical aspects. It can be safely claimed that the rail link is fully compatible with integrity standards.

### **Authenticity**

All the constituting parts of the Trans-Iranian Railway (its rail route, tunnels, bridges, train stations, buildings and other appurtenances) have totally preserved their authenticity in form, design, materials, function, management and technical systems, setting, intangible heritage and authenticity of spirit. All the principal and particular characteristics of the rail link, as well as its universal values, can be observed within the defined boundaries of the route. The Trans-Iranian Railway is a living and dynamic industrial and engineering structure that enjoys a high degree of authenticity. The property has remained almost intact thanks to the existence of laws and regulations for buffer zones, as well as technical, visual and functional requirements.

#### **Protection and management requirements**

Since its establishment, the Trans-Iranian Railway has had a comprehensive plan for management and conservation. The conservation and management plans of the proposed property and its boundaries in the domains of planning, implementation, restoration, maintenance, supervision, evaluation and feedback have been devised and stored in relevant data banks. The railway has a management master plan for long-term conservation in sections related to: technological, non-technological, operational, financial, commercial, safety, security, civil engineering, mechanics, electricity, signals and telecommunications. These plans preserve methods and processes which guarantee the continued existence of rail links in accordance with the outstanding universal value.

There exists a balance between the managerial and conservation activities carried out jointly by the IMCHTH and Iran's Railway Company, a balance between conserving the security and the cultural heritage of the TIR.

Conservation, repair, maintenance and management of the railway are controlled by the Railway Company of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Trans-Iranian Railway has been under conservation for many years and has uninterruptedly been in constant use. Based on its engineering characteristics, the technical requirements are handled by trained personnel in various sections.

#### ***4. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:***

~~*a) Reconsider the scope of the nomination on the basis of an expanded and augmented exploration of the role of Trans-Iranian Railway in the modernization of the country;*~~

~~*b) Create a complete inventory and thorough documentation of all the tangible features that could support a revised justification for inscription, deeply analyse their cultural significance in relation to the revised scope of the nomination; and, in a more holistic way, address the cultural heritage elements (such as buildings) with the same level of detail as the engineering elements;*~~

~~*c) Revise the comparative analysis, the justification for inscription and the criteria, focusing on the most appropriate ones in relation to the potential of the nominated property and the revised focus of the nomination;*~~

~~*d) Establish a conservation plan to complement the existing Management Plan, with the objective of better ensuring the appropriate balance between measures that address the safety and operational viability of the railway, and the conservation of the nominated property as cultural resource;*~~

~~e) Reconsider the organizational hierarchy to ensure that decision-making regarding the nominated property's cultural heritage is positioned at the most effective level;~~

a) Documenting, monitoring and conserving the historical buildings and other elements that are no longer in use,

b) Preparing a Heritage Impact Assessment of the planned electrification of the Tehran—Garmsar—Bandar-e Torkaman line,

c) Encouraging community involvement by means of the full and effective participation of a wide variety of stakeholders and rights-holders.