

State of Conservation Reports by the States Parties

Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong

(Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (C 1278rev)

1. Executive Summary of the report

The World Heritage Committee at its 37th session in Cambodia 2013 adopted the decision (37 COM 8B.30) to inscribe the *Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong* on the World Heritage List, and at its 41st session in Krakow 2017, examined the State of Conservation Report on the *Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong*.

Furthermore, at its 43rd session in Baku 2019, the World Heritage Committee having examined the updated State of Conservation Report on the *Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong*, adopted the decision **43 COM 7B.60**, recommending the state Party to develop and implement further capacity-building initiatives within the management bodies responsible for the conservation of the inscribed property, to submit information about any planned project that could have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the inscribed property to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and to actively address issues of urban heritage conservation in the old residential quarter of Kaesong, located within the buffer zone of the property.

The Ministry of Culture which is responsible for the protection of national heritage in the DPRK, has pushed forward due activities to implement the decision of the World Heritage Committee.

Concerning the capacity-building within the management bodies responsible for the conservation of the inscribed property, constant attention is given to reinforcement of the conservation and management staff with well-qualified researchers and skilled personnel, while the training workshops, experience presentation, examination of technical qualification and online education served to raise the technical expertise of the technical personnel. Publication of the technical references for conservation of cultural property is promoted and the skilled personnel are encouraged to participate in the scientific research and the conservation interventions.

As for the urban heritage conservation in the old residential quarter of Kaesong, city management institutions and supervisory organs are cooperative to fulfil their responsibilities for the maintenance of the old residential quarter, focussing on the education of the residents to make them participate in maintaining their traditional houses with a high sense of responsibility.

Amidst the growing interest in the conservation of the property, the Ministry of Culture would continue to take necessary steps to overcome the challenges to its conservation and ensure their strict implementation under legal control.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

The World Heritage Committee at its 43th session in Baku 2019, having examined the updated State of Conservation Report on the *Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong* submitted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, adopted the decision **43 COM 7B.60** as follows:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/7B,*
2. *Recalling Decision 43 COM 7B.89, adopted at its 41st session(Krakow, 2017),*
3. *Welcomes the information provided by the State Party concerning the formal endorsement of the Tourism Management Plan for the Property, including the Interpretation Plan, the process to establish work plans for the 2019-2023 period, and the reported enhancements to the structure of the property management system in order to strengthen the monitoring and implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives;*
4. *Notes that there are ongoing challenges to the conservation of wooden structures, roof tiles and mural paintings in the tombs, and encourages the State Party to develop and implement further capacity-building initiatives in these areas of technical expertise, including the provision of suitably skilled personnel within the management bodies responsible for the conservation of the inscribed property;*
5. *Requests the State Party to ensure that all planned projects or works, including those that form part of the Tourism Management Plan, are subject to Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) in conformity with the 2011 ICOMOS Guidance on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage Properties, and that information about any planned project that could have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the inscribed property is submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;*
6. *Also encourages the State Party to actively address issues of urban heritage conservation in the old residential quarter of Kaesong, located within the buffer zone of the property, and to make full use of the principles and tools developed for the implementation of the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape;*
7. *Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2020, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.*

Capacity-building activities in the areas of technical expertise within the management bodies

Researchers and skilled personnel in the areas of technical expertise including history, ancient architecture, chemistry, biology and so forth on are appointed to management and conservation bodies responsible for the property. The technical personnel participate in training workshops and forums on exchanges of experience and also join online education system to ensure expertise and knowledge on advanced conservation techniques.

Every two years a nationwide examination of technical qualification in the field of cultural heritage conservation is held, which is a good opportunity for assessing and raising their technical knowledge and expertise.

The scientific research institutes endeavour to collate the achievements to publish the technical references for the conservation of stones, timbers, mural paintings and so on.

More importantly, the technicians and skilled personnel actively take part in the scientific study and conservation interventions in cooperation with the scientific research institutes in order to gain profound knowledge and experience in the thick of reality.

Heritage Impact Assessments on all planned projects or works at property and buffer zone.

It is an important policy of the government as well as common desire of the local residents to well preserve Kaesong as a historic town.

All the projects and works mapped out in the Management Plan and the Tourism Management Plan were elaborated in reflectance of the policy and desire, and are considered to meet the Heritage Impact Assessments in conformity with the 2011 ICOMOS Guidance on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage Properties.

Recently the government has initiated a new project to develop Kaesong into a cultural tourism focus, underscoring the preservation of its characteristics as a historic town. The new Urban Development Plan which is under preparation is to be approved by the Ministry of Culture. The Plan is being drawn up on the principles of prohibiting any developments which might impact the Outstanding Universal Value of the property within the property areas (core zones), while maintaining the old residential quarter in the buffer zone and preserving the cultural landscape of the historic town.

The Ministry of Culture which is responsible for the conservation of the world heritage property including the *Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong*, a common wealth of humankind, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, will inform well in advance the World Heritage Centre on any developments in the buffer zone, which might impact the OUV of the inscribed property, and seek for appropriate solutions.

Conserving the old residential quarter of Kaesong located within the buffer zone

Having the remains or features intact across the city representing the specific historic period and culture, Kaesong represents a historic town which is still inhabited. The old residential quarter in the buffer zone is a witness to the long period evolution of urban culture that has sustainably been maintained, conveying characteristics of historic landscape and significance of conservation.

Meanwhile it is considered that identification and conservation of different historic layers of cultural value in the buffer zone that is maintained in modern environment conform to the requirements for maintaining OUV of the inscribed property. For this, a research group involving specialists in history, traditional architecture and conservation from the Kaesong National Heritage Protection and Management Office, Management Office for Mausoleum of King Wang Kon and Management Office for Manwoldae is studying on balancing of the conservation and sustainable development of historic urban landscape.

Recently some residents in the old residential quarter seek to change interior fabric of their houses into a modern pattern. Though this is a minor tendency, it could grow over time.

The most effective way to address the issue is to integrate the interests of residents with the lifestyle in their traditional houses. The Korean-style residential quarter takes an important place in the sustainable development of Kaesong and is expected to be a major attraction for the tourists in the future too. With increasing liveliness and scope of tourism in Kaesong, the tourists will pay deep attention to the Korean traditional style of houses. In this regard, the Tourism Management Plan foresees encouraging the residents to link their direct interests to tourism and to turn their deep concern to management and conservation of traditional residential buildings, while raising awareness and repeating education.

In case of any impact on the traditional architecture, the Cultural Department (formerly Cultural Perseveration Department) of the Kaesong City People's Committee would strictly evaluate the changes based on statutory regulations and discussion in the non-permanent committee of national heritage protection of Kaesong City, and take measures to preserve the original state. Informing the residents on relevant regulations to prevent such attempts in advance, the Cultural Department monitor any changes in the houses and in the residential quarter in every spring and autumn in cooperation with the Urban Management Department and the supervisory bodies.

All the planned or ongoing works are realistic in the respect of sustainable development, and correspond to the 2011 UNESCO Recommendations on the Historic Urban Landscape.

Scientific research and Management activities since 2019

After the submission of the updated report on the state of conservation of the property for examination by the World Heritage Committee in 2019, scientific research for conservation of wooden structures and mural paintings has made continuous advance. The scientific institutes including the Korea National Heritage Preservation Agency have promoted the research for reinforcing the mechanical strength of the decayed wooden elements to near completion. They also developed the inorganic binders to prevent the formation of recrystallizing salts which detach the paint layer of the murals of the Mausoleum of King Wang Kon. The binders are now in an experimental stage for application in the tomb environment.

From January 2020, the Government has taken thorough measures to protect the life and safety of the people against the current worldwide pandemic disease. As the result, public access to the world heritage sites in Kaesong as well as to other historic sites over the country has been suspended, and necessary guidance and consultation for conservation and management of the property are conducted through virtual or online meetings. But the day-to-day on-site management and minor repairs at the property are undertaken on a regular basis according to the annual work plan.

Following table shows the minor repairs done in 2019 and 2020.

Property	Contents of repairs	Duration
Kaesong Namdae Gate	Partial replacement of the floor boards in the gatehouse	September 2019
Sungyang Sowon	Partial replacement of the rafters of the dormitory building	October 2019
Kaesong Namdae Gate	Partial replacement of the floor boards in the gatehouse	May 2020
Myongrung Cluster	Repair of the bases of tombs and cleaning of the vicinity	June 2020
Phyochung Monuments	Repair of the roof of the pavilion	June 2020
Koryo Songgyungwan	Repair of the roof of western shrine	September 2020
Mausoleum of King Wang Kon	Reviving colour tones of the painting of the tomb gate	October 2020

At present, the conservation of the property is in good state and there exist no factors that could have negative impact on the OUV of the property.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a State Party to the Convention considers that the activities taken in response to the decisions of the World Heritage Committee meet the request and spirit of the Convention and the decisions of the World Heritage Committee.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Values

There are no other current conservation issues identified.

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

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

The State Party agrees that the report can be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of Conservation Information System.

6. Signature of the Authority

Name: Jon Myong Sik

Title: Minister of Culture

Date: 16 December, 2020

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Myong Sik', written in a cursive style.