

# **Report on the implementation of the Recommendations mentioned in the Decision: 44 COM 7B.Add to be examined by the World Heritage Committee**

## **1. Executive Summary**

The State Party of Eritrea has been working toward the implementation of the World Heritage Committee Decision on WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add for Asmara- a Modernist City of Africa. Since the inscription of the property, Eritrea has made some progress on the implementation based on the recommendations and decision by the World Heritage Committee. We summarize the State of Conservation Report as follows: -

As per the request of the World Heritage Committee, we provided clarification about the main stakeholders involved in management and conservation of the property.

In our previous reporting period of the State of Conservation Report, the State Party estimated the timeframe for the completion of DUCMP and APNTR during 2021. Due to COVID-19 and other unforeseen circumstances, the initial estimated timeframe require revision. Therefore, the State Party Eritrea has extended the timeframe for completion of the DUCMP by 2023 in order to develop coherent UCMP strategies and appropriate instrument to implement the plan. The State Party will exert all the necessary effort to finalize the DUCMP and APNTR in 2023, we will also submit the final report to UNESCO - World Heritage Centre in September 2023 for review by advisory bodies.

Eritrea's first ever Cultural and Natural Heritage Proclamation (CNHP) was enacted in 2015. For the implementation of the Proclamation, a Managing Director and the Eritrean Cultural and Natural Heritage Board have established, which requires human and financial resources. The State Party understood the World Heritage Committee's concern and will facilitate for the urgent declaration of Asmara as a Protected Site for its preservation and conservation.

The Local Economic Development Plan (LEDP) was planned to carry out the study during 2021. However, the preparation of the contract documents and selection of the national and international consultants on heritage economics took longer time than expected. As a result, it has encountered delays. The State Party would like to inform you that the LEDP study will be realized during 2023.

There are ongoing discussions between the Central Region Administration and Commission of Culture and Sports on how AHP be better organized to fulfill the tasks of as the central management body of Asmara World Heritage Property. The revised organizational structures of AHP will provide a range of functional responsibilities, better coordination and management of the World Heritage Site. The request by the World Heritage Committee has not yet been fully addressed, however, the State Party Eritrea has been working hard regarding these issues and will be reporting to the World Heritage Centre (WHC) in due time.

## 2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

In Decision WHC 21-44 COM7 B.Add.en, the World Heritage requested the following information:

### *Clarification on the main stakeholders involved in management and conservation of the property:*

**2.1 The Central Region Administration (the Municipality of Asmara):** Eritrea, has six administrative regions under the umbrella of Ministry of Local Government. The Central Region (Zoba Maekel) is one of the six administrative regions at national level. As per proclamation No 86/1996 of the establishment of Local Governments. The Central Region (Zoba Maekel) is a city - region Local Government Unit which is in charge of the decentralized responsibilities on all its territory. The Central Region was administratively divided into 16 sub-regional structures, and it is structured in 3 rural (rural part of the region) and 13 urban districts. Asmara Municipality is today composed of 13 urban districts “kebabis”. The Central Region Administration, is a regional administration and has combined function of the Municipality of Asmara. The Governor is the highest administrative authority in his region.

**2.2 The Department of Public Works Development (DPWD):** this department was previously called Department of Infrastructural Services (DIS) and it is the leading agency for infrastructure, building and urban issues. It has, at the same time, operational responsibilities such as day-to-day road maintenance, but also planning responsibility. It has also, a longer administrative tradition than the other departments at the central region level, based on the history of the Municipality. The department is composed of four divisions: 1) Urban Planning Division, 2) Buildings Design and Supervision Division 3) Roads Construction and Maintenance Division, and 4) Agricultural Infrastructure Division. In addition, it has other support units, which include: Archives, Public’s Affairs office, Personnel and Machinery Pool. Regarding the tools and procedures used for urban planning, the Department appears today as the main responsible body of urban planning in Asmara. In general terms, the Department is responsible for:

1. Preparation of urban development plan including parceling land and preparation of land ownership,
2. Approval of projects and issuing construction permits,
3. Construction of roads and dams
4. Maintenance of roads (within and outside the city), street lights and drainage,
5. Preparation and design of small municipal projects,
6. Controlling building permits and supervising of works according to the outline of urban regulation,
7. Oversee the protection of the historical perimeter and make sure that new development is adopted with the spirit and integrity of historic city,
8. Granting planning approval according to the outlines of urban regulations.

### **2.1.1 The Urban Planning Division is responsible for:**

1. Developing and monitoring a framework for urban development at the Central Region Administration,
2. Provide guidance for urban planning and surveying works,
3. Monitor and evaluate planning works during their implementation stages,
4. Involved in the preparation and implementation of residential, commercial, industrial and infrastructure projects undertaken by the municipality (Central Region Administration),
5. Analyse demographic, socio-economic and infrastructure data,
6. Oversee the protection of the historical perimeter and make sure that new development is adopted with the spirit and integrity of historic city,
7. Preparing Terms of reference for urban development studies,
8. To rectify and approval of urban development plans prepared and submitted by local and international consultants,
9. Prepare contract documents, terms of reference, evaluate bidding documents, recruit consultants and contractors, follow up and evaluate projects.

### **2.1.2 The Building and Supervision Division is responsible for:**

1. Establish building regulation
2. Monitoring building safety and scrutiny of design works and their compliance with regulation and rules (architectural, structural, sanitary and electrical),
3. Issuing building permits,
4. Issuing of habitation license for building and completion stages,
5. Prohibit illegal housing construction and decide to demolish if necessary,
6. Carry out and follow building design and construction work which are planned to be executed by the City Administration,
7. Prepare contract documents, terms of reference, evaluate bidding documents, recruit consultants and contractors, follow up and evaluate projects.

### **2.1.3 The Road and Maintenance Division is responsible for:**

1. Prepare planned activities of the division, provide guidance, coordinate and monitors
2. Develop strategic plan for road sector in accordance with national road policies,
3. All the proclamation or legal guidelines and policies pertinent to road sector their and execution and implementation follow up,
4. Undertake research activities and present to the Director General of the Department of Public Works Development
5. Carry out and follow up all roads shall meet the Ministry of Public Works technical standard,
6. Based on public demand, it identifies that new priority road route/lines
7. Carry out maintenance activities for existing asphalt and earthen roads,
8. Road construction activities shall be in conformity with environmental and cultural assets,
9. Prepare contract documents, terms of reference, evaluate bidding documents, recruit consultants and contractors, follow up and evaluate projects.

**2.1.4 The Asmara Heritage Project (AHP):** AHP was established in March 2014 under the Auspices of the Central Region Administration (Municipality of Asmara) with a remit to prepare the necessary materials for the inscription of Asmara onto UNESCO's World Heritage list and to safeguard the city's rich architectural heritage. The AHP operates as an autonomous office with its own staff and has the mandate to undertake various studies and research. Financially, it has its own operating budget and periodically submits reports and prepare various proposals about the World Heritage Site and Buffer Zone. AHP is also responsible for the implementation of projects financed by donor organizations. At present, AHP has 20 staff with variety of professions including architects, urban planners, engineers, Auto CAD and GIS operators, archivists and management team. AHP has the proper knowledge and background of working with world heritage files. Currently, AHP is the principal body responsible for managing the World Heritage Site and for the preparation of the Detailed Urban Conservation Master Plan. AHP is also undertaking the role of coordination around the World Heritage Property and Buffer zone in partnership with key stakeholders.

**2.3. Department of Culture and Sports (DCS) of the Central Region Administration:** The recently established Department of Culture and Sports at regional level is entrusted with the following mandate to:

1. Prepare policies and strategic plan in accordance to the directives of the Commission of Culture and Sports by involving the responsible members for approval and implementation,
2. Conserve and protect the culture by leading and coordinating the community,
3. Propagate the culture of Eritrean patriotism by transmitting and developing the concept to the future generation,
4. Conserve the valuable cultural heritage assets like manuscripts in video and audio for archival in Museums and Library at regional level,
5. Discover and find a way to conserve natural or man-made (handcraft) valuable assets by careful identification and preservation,
6. Find ways to identify historical and artisanal (artistically) assets by examining the origin, nature, age with scientifically collected conservation documents,
7. Outline training programs for all employs of the commission and pertinent stakeholders.

**2.4. The Commission of Culture and Sports (CCS):** is the sole responsible body for both Culture and Sports sectors at a national level. It formulates the national policy and acts as a regulatory body on the nation's Cultural and Sport development. Among the main missions of the Commission include; to develop and implement research projects that are focused on sustainable use, conservation and preservation of Eritrea's priceless cultural heritage. It also co-ordinates national research pursuits related to the archaeological, paleontological and built heritage across the country. In order to decentralize its mandate, the commission established six departments of Culture and Sports at the six administrative regions of the country. In a time of swift technical advancement, events of armed conflict, rapidly changing cultural, socio-economic environment and developmental activities, the establishment of the commission of Culture and Sports is indispensable, in terms of studying, preserving, conserving, promoting the country's cultural heritage.

## 2.5 Others stakeholders

Various organizations that work in the field of cultural heritage and tourism can contribute to conservation, presentation and promotion of the site on more ad hoc basis. These institutions include the following:

- Ministry of Local Government
- Ministry of Education
- Department of Tourism of Central Region Administration
- Tourism Sector Association

## Concluding remarks

The Central Region Administration (CRA) is the parent institution for the Department of Public Works Development (DPWD) and AHP. The DPWD is responsible for maintaining and improving Asmara's infrastructure, as well as safeguarding its urban heritage through the enforcement of planning and building regulations. It has more than 150 staff members of diverse professions including: architects, planners, engineers, surveyors, draftsmen and technicians.

The Asmara Heritage Project office is an institution within DPWD. The AHP operates as autonomous office with its own staff and has mandate to undertake various studies and research. Financially, it has its own operating budget and periodically submits reports and prepare various proposals about the World Heritage Site and Buffer Zone. AHP is also responsible for the implementation of projects financed by donor organizations. At present, AHP has 20 staff with diverse professional including architects, urban planners, engineers, Auto CAD and GIS operators, archivists and management team. Currently, the AHP is the principal body responsible for managing the World Heritage Site and for the preparation of the Urban Conservation Master Plan.

AHP is also undertaking the role of coordination and managing the World Heritage Property and Buffer zone in collaboration with all above mention key stakeholders.

The State Party has expressed its strong commitment and engagement since the creation of the Asmara Heritage Project prior to the recommendation of the World Heritage Committee to set up appropriate institutional arrangements. There are ongoing discussions between the Central Region Administration and Commission of Culture and Sports on how AHP can better to fulfill its mandate to manage Asmara World Heritage Property. The revised organizational structures of AHP will provide a range of functional responsibilities, better coordination and management of the World Heritage Site. This request by the World Heritage Committee has not yet been fully addressed, however, the State Party Eritrea has been working hard on this regards the issue of concern and will be reporting to the World Heritage Centre (WHC).

**4. Acknowledges the progress made on the Urban Conservation Master Plan (UCMP) and the Asmara Planning and Technical Regulation (APTR), but requests the State Party to work with its consultants to finalize these documents in order to submit them as soon as possible to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;**

**Response (4):**

The Asmara Heritage Project (AHP) is responsible for the preparation of the Detailed Urban Conservation Master Plan (DUCMP) and the Asmara Planning Norms and Technical Regulations (APNTR). AHP has been working to prepare the conservation master plan with an Italian international consultant Atelier P 95 S.r.l., The following activities have been carried out regarding the DUCMP and APTR : -

According to the guidelines of the WHC (World Heritage Center) has been drafted of a Detailed Urban Conservation Plan (hereinafter as DUCMP), as a fundamental component of the Management Plan, in order to plan the overall protection and valorization of the Asmara WHS and to introduce integrated conservation criteria for the integrated conservation of the historical and social heritage. The preparation of the DUCMP focuses on three phases respectively as follows: 1) Identification, 2) Analysis and 3) conservation planning policies

1- The first phase concerned the recognition and sizing of the WHS in the context of the historic areas in Asmara to be directly and indirectly protected. Three territorial zones have been indicated, corresponding to different protective measures; the first two correspond to the perimeters recognized by UNESCO as Core zones and as Buffer Zones; a third external area has been indicated as a territory to be restricted in order to protect the first two with a strip intended for green protection, as recommended by the "Directives on the Safeguarding of Historic Centers" of the Council of Europe in 1978. According to the 2012 UNESCO recommendations, the third area, together with the Buffer Zone, has been declared an "Urban Historic Landscape" (HUL).

According to "Operational Guidelines" adopted by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2021, the DUCMP has included in the perimeter, some areas outside the WHS, considering the strategic areas in order to ensure the socio-economic redevelopment of the historical heritage, now subject to overpopulation and concentration of technological services.

The new perimeter in which the DUCMP is to be applied has been defined as the Integrated Historical Perimeter (hereinafter as IHP).

Specific detailed plans of the strategic areas will establish the portions of residence and social services that can be transferred to optimize the integrated conservation of the heritage and guarantee an adequate quality of life. In anticipation of the Management Plan, was sized the IHP to quantify the commitments that will have to be undertaken to activate and plan management in the future, with precise multi-year programs, including financial aspects. It emerged that the Asmara WHS covers approximately 478.3ha and that its components are respectively 142.3ha of built areas, 201.47ha of open areas and 134.5ha of street network. Therefore, there is an equal percentage of the components. The strategic areas amount to approximately 259ha.

The information collected for identification, which included the recognition of the perimeter of the modernist city, the perimeter of the areas to be protected and the references of the archive

sources have been prepared in graphical drawings (plates) which are an integral part of the DUCMP

2- Based on archived research and direct inspections, it was decided to carry out direct analyzes of all the architectural and urban heritage present today in the IHP, aimed at censoring the state of preservation of the buildings and the urban fabric; the current and original intended uses, the current conditions of the residence, the existing public and private social services, the state of the street network and technological infrastructures. The AHP team surveyed 4,346 buildings, it has also collected the demographic data of 9,364 families and 37,828 inhabitants.

The cartographic data has been updated and demographic data have been collected in 8 volumes which respectively contain the indications of the direct analyses, distinguished by the 15 zones into which the perimeter of the modernist city has been divided, and the photographic repertoire of all the buildings, which included a total of 31,156 photographs.

3- The conservation planning phase focused on five intervention policies, applying the universal principles of the "Charter of Restoration, known as Venice of 1964", of the "Charter of Historic Cities, known as Washington of 1987", and of the "Capacity Directive Building" of the UN. of 2011. The policies adopted as an objective include the as following:

- a) Architectural and urban heritage conservation policy
- b) Housing Rehabilitation policy
- c) Public social services policy
- d) Traffic and parking policy, and
- e) Technological infrastructure policy

Each of these policies, have been elaborated based on the predicted plans, and were discussed and defined with AHP, and will be supported in graphic drawings (plates) which are in the final drafting phase. The DCUMP does not enter into the merits of the strategic areas, delegating both the finalized analyzes and the planning indications to the specific Detailed Plans. However, it has foreseen what should be located in these areas, it must respond to the needs of the recovery and enhancement of the WHS, both as a residence and as urban or territorial social services, and as logistical structures to be decentralized as they are incompatible in the WHS. In the strategic areas affected by the penetration streets of large external traffic, the park and ride parks have been located, for the parking of external mechanical traffic and access to the WHS with public transport or bicycles.

For the application of the DUCMP, the Planning Norms and the Building Regulations have been under development:

1. The Planning Norms regulate the interventions for each building or public space, based on their typological characteristics and their state of preservation (Conservation Policy Plans) which include the reuse of the historical heritage for residential purposes (Housing Rehabilitation Policy Plan) and for the provision of social services necessary for the resident population (Social Public Service Policy Plan); finally, the measures to be taken to rationalize and adapt mechanical traffic and parking within WHS in relation to the external viability (Mobility Policy Plan). The directives for the adaptation of the technological infrastructures have been formulated but the operating procedures have been delegated to the programs of the responsible technicians who will have to operate in progression with the recovery and revaluation of the Site.



2. The Technical Regulations specify the methods of direct intervention on buildings and open areas, provide detailed indications on the requirements that the owners must meet in order to have authorization to operate, to use appropriate techniques and materials, to commit to a planned protection of the historic heritage over time. Finally, it was considered valuable to attach a glossary of the definitions of the technical terms to the Norms and Regulations, since in modern urban planning, it has not yet consciously inserted the policy of conservation language.

Currently, the AHP is working on full capacity to finalize the DUCMP and APTNR. All the necessary data is provided by the national experts of AHP, the consultant Atelier P95 that has been working on the analyses and developing the strategies. The outputs expected are DUCMP for architecture, conservation for the urban fabric as part of the historic urban landscape, a plan for services, a plan for mobility and traffic, developing action plans with clear priorities for the conservation on interventions, and budget proposals for restoration and renovation programmes.

This study has made tremendous progress but it could not be completed within the proposed timeframe because: -

- 1) The study covers huge area which comprise of over 470Ha land and requires comprehensive data collection and continuous updating. As a result, collection of additional information has much taken longer time than expected;
- 2) The task required highly qualified international conservation experts to carry out the analyses and to formulate conservation policies and guidelines. The Atelier P95 Srl consultant could not travel to Eritrea for working mission due to worldwide corona virus restriction, and this hampered to carry out consultation and discussions with key stakeholders;
- 3) The AHP office has also shortage of technological equipment (e.g. wide angle lens cameras and powerful computers to store the huge data) which has become a bottle neck for the performance of the activities;

In our previous reporting period of the State of Conservation Report, the State Party estimated the timeframe for the completion of DUCMP and APNTR in 2021. However, due to the above mentioned challenges and unforeseen circumstances', the initial estimated timeframe required revision. Therefore, the State Party has extended the timeframe for completion of the DUCMP by 2023 in order to develop coherent DUCMP and detailed conservation planning as well as technical regulation.

The State Party will undertake all the necessary effort to complete the DUCMP and APNTR during 2023. We will also submit the final report to UNESCO - World Heritage Centre during September 2023 for examination by the advisory bodies- ICOMOS and ICCROM.



*5. Requests the State Party to complete the process of designation of the Property as a Protected Site within the framework of the Cultural and Natural Heritage Proclamation of 2015 in order to provide a framework for the implementation of the UCMP and for the safeguarding of the property*

**Response (5):**

The Government of Eritrea established the Commission of Culture and Sports (CCS) which is the sole responsible government body for both culture and sports during 2014. The Commission formulates policy and regulatory body for the nation's cultural and sports development.

The Commission of Culture and Sports and the Central Region Administration have been working in close collaboration and coordination in various cultural activities, specifically with Asmara Heritage Project. This has been demonstrated in the recently successful Asmara UNESCO- World Heritage Dossier preparation and post inscription conservation activities. There is also ongoing joint initiative to prepare and revise the Integrated Management Plan (2024-2029) for the World Heritage Property.

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic on 6<sup>th</sup> March of 2020 and the Eritrean Government acted quickly and prepared measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. It announced a nationwide lock down by April 2 and all government office and school, private business activities were shut down and public transport was stopped. In comparison, with many other developing countries, Eritrea's lockdown measures were very strict since the break out of the Corona virus in February 2020. This year, the government has started to ease the measures and re-opened up businesses and public offices. As a result, most institutions have been overwhelmed to address on the impact of Covid crisis and are working on recovery measures. Therefore, the State party couldn't complete the process of designation of the Property as a Protected Site due to the above unforeseen circumstances. The State Party understood the World Heritage Committee's concern and will facilitate for the designation of Asmara World Heritage Site as a Protected Site for its preservation and conservation. The State Party would like also to assure you that we are working on it.

*6. Further reiterates its request for the development of a financial strategy through the foreseen Local Economic Development Plan, linked to the UCMP, for funding the necessary conservation and management activities*

**Response (6):**

In response to these recommendations, the State Party Eritrea has initiated a Local Economic Development Plan (LEDP) for Asmara: A Modernist City of Africa World Heritage Property. The State Party has received international assistance from the World Heritage Centre to carry out Local Economic Development Plan study. The State Party has made the following progress: preparing Terms of Reference (ToR) for national and international heritage economic consultants, the ToR was sent to the World Heritage Centre for review and approval. AHP has also sent a letter to inform that 'the Central Region Administration (Municipality of Asmara) has no objection for hiring consultancy services' in October 2022. AHP has also prepared contract agreement in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre. We would like to inform you that the LEDP contract agreement will be signed in December 2022 and the study is expected to be commenced by January 2023.



### *Other organizational activities*

The 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL Recommendation) was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its 36th session on 10 November 2011 (36 C/Resolution 41) and recommends to Member States to integrate policies and practices of conservation of the built environment into the wider goals of urban development, in respect of the inherited values and traditions of different cultural contexts. This innovative standard-setting instrument calls for the conservation of urban heritage to be embraced for its contribution to culturally vibrant, economically prosperous, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable cities and settlements.

The Third UNESCO Member States consultation on the implementation of the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape was launched by the World Heritage Centre and took place in October 2022. The State Party participated in filling of the HUL survey form for Asmara: an African Modernist City World Heritage Site and it has submitted to the Secretariat with recent data statistics and activities in 3rd of November 2022.

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

At present, the State Party would like to assure you that there is no threat which can impact the World Heritage Property's Outstanding Universal Value.

*4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the operational Guidelines describe any potential major restorations alteration and/or new construction(s) intended within the property and 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.*

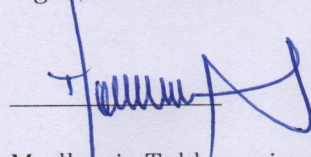
Currently, there are no major restoration or new construction projects in the World Heritage Property and the buffer zone which may affect potentially the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property including the authenticity and integrity. The State Party will report to the World Heritage Centre when there are intentions of potential projects such as major restoration, alteration, and/or new construction in the World Heritage Property to comply with the paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

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

The State Party doesn't have any objection to this report being uploaded on UNESCO- World Heritage Centre State conservation report information system websites.

*6. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2022, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session in 2023*

Signature of the Authorities



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