

State of Conservation Report

for

Maloti–Drakensberg Park  
World Heritage Site

Lesotho and South Africa

Submitted

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

DECEMBER 2022



## **PART I – IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY**

Name of property: Maloti–Drakensberg Park

Identification number: 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: 44 COM 7B.170 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, 41 COM 7B.38 and 43 COM 7B.38, whose progress is also captured in the report.

The States Parties reiterate their commitment to limiting conservation interventions for the rock art sites to addressing immediate and urgent vulnerabilities only, and to submit the Environmental and Heritage impact assessment reports for the proposed cableway, as well as the shale gas and oil explorations, to the World Heritage Centre, as soon as the assessments are done and completed.

The State Party of South Africa confirms that the following mitigation measures were put place during the construction and operational phases to ensure the continued protection of the OUV: -

- installation of a functional oil trap for polluted water running off from the petrol station forecourt /fuel dispensing areas
- strict monitoring of the storage and dispensing of petroleum products to ensure that no pollution occurs
- entrance for the petrol station is the same one on R160 that is currently used for the shopping centre.

The States 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 Lesotho confirms that the Biodiversity Resources Management Bill has been approved by the National Assembly and will soon be forwarded to the Senate for further discussion and presentation to the King for Royal Assent. The States Parties confirm that the joint letter, in support of the submission of a request for a Minor Boundary Modification to formalize the buffer zone to the south of the Sehlabathebe National Park in South Africa, was submitted to the World Heritage Committee on 13 October 2022

The two States Parties are not aware of any other conservation issues, proposals or applications for major restorations, alterations and constructions within the property or its buffer zone which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property including authenticity and integrity.

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

- 2.1 ***Appreciates the confirmation by the States Parties that conservation interventions for the rock art sites will be limited to addressing immediate and urgent vulnerabilities only, and the commitment by the State Party of South Africa to undertake Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments in line with IUCN and ICOMOS guidelines for the proposed cableway in the immediate vicinity of the property and for a proposed shale gas, gas and oil exploration within the newly proposed buffer zone in South Africa, and to submit the impact assessments to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies before making any decisions that may be difficult to reverse in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;***

The States Parties reiterate their commitment to:-

- limiting conservation interventions for the rock art sites to addressing immediate and urgent vulnerabilities only, and
- undertake the Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments, in line with IUCN and ICOMOS guidelines, for the proposed cableway, as well as the shale gas and oil explorations within the newly proposed buffer zone in South Africa, and to submit the resultant impact assessment reports to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies before making any decisions.

- 2.2 ***Takes note that the appeal lodged by the management authority over the petrol filling station within the property's buffer zone in South Africa was rejected, but also recalling the concerns that were raised in relation to the potential negative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), requests the State Party of South Africa to provide further details on how the potential impacts of the petrol filling station were mitigated during construction and the measures that have been put in place during the operational phase to ensure the continued protection of the OUV;***

The State Party of South Africa confirms that the following mitigation measures were put in place during the construction and operational phases to ensure the continued protection of the Outstanding Universal Value:-

- installation of a functional oil trap for polluted water running off from the petrol station forecourt /fuel dispensing areas
- strict monitoring of the storage and dispensing of petroleum products to ensure that no pollution occurs

- entrance for the petrol station is the same one on R160 that is currently used for the shopping centre.

**2.3 *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 confirm that the Integrated Management Plan for the South African component of the property, the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, was signed off by the Minister on 09 September 2022 and submitted to UNESCO World Heritage centre on the 13 October 2022. The consolidation of the management plans of the individual components of the property will be initiated soon as part of the process of reviewing 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.

**2.4 *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 confirms that the Biodiversity Resources Management Bill has been approved by the National Assembly and will soon be forwarded to the Senate for further discussion and presentation to the King for Royal Assent.

**2.5 *Notes the submission of a request for a Minor Boundary Modification to formalize the buffer zone to the south of the Sehlabathebe National Park in South Africa, and also requests the States Parties to formalize this submission with a joint letter by both States Parties, so that it can be transferred for evaluation by the Advisory Bodies;***

The States Parties confirm that the joint letter was submitted to the World Heritage Committee on 13 October 2022 and the WHC acknowledged the receipt of the joint letter.

**3. *Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) 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.

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 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.**

The States Parties are not aware of any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the property or buffer zone which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

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**

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Ms Flora Mokgohloa


Deputy Director-General

Biodiversity and Conservation:

Department of Forestry,

Fisheries and the Environment

Date: 01/12/2022

  
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Ms Moliehi Moejane

Principal Secretary

Ministry of Tourism, Environment  
and Culture

Date: 01/12/2022