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World Heritage Convention

45COM

AMENDMENT/PROPOSAL

Agenda Item	7B
Draft Decision	45 COM_7B. 35_____
Submitted by the Delegation of....	Republic of South Africa
Co-author(s) (if any)	
Date of submission	September <u>11</u>, 2023

TEXT

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.35

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions 43 COM 7B.105 and 44 COM 7B.118, adopted at its 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,
3. Acknowledges the information provided by the State Party, including the studies from the Environmental Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), on the progress of preparations related to the Ethiopian-French bilateral Sustainable Lalibela project and the further elaboration of adapted design options for canopies proposed to cover all rock-hewn churches;
4. Welcomes the results of detailed investigations carried out under the French-Ethiopian bilateral programme in support of Lalibela to collect monitoring data and assess conservation efforts since the early 20th century for both sheltered and unsheltered State of conservation of properties WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add, p. 68 inscribed on the World Heritage List churches and takes note of the recommendations of the ESIA and HIA regarding the current stage of the canopy sheltering proposal;

To be submitted to the Rapporteur at: wh-rapporteur@unesco.org

5. Notes the State Party's conclusion that one of the viable solutions to protect these churches from adverse weathering and stone deterioration is to cover them with permanent shelters, in ways that mitigate the negative impacts of current shelters as perceived by the local community and visitors;
6. Considers that the ESIA and the HIA pointed out that not enough data has been collected yet to define conclusively a state of environmental equilibrium for each of the 11 churches, nor precisely what impact shelters might have, to support the idea of permanent shelters, and requests that a robust monitoring and maintenance regimen be developed on a partnership basis with the aim of involving local communities and implemented as soon as possible, and therefore also considers that the shelter option should continue to be an temporary evolving solution that could be reconsidered and reassessed in the future on the basis of feedback from local communities and ongoing monitoring in consultation with the World Heritage Center and Advisory Bodies;
7. Further considers that any new shelters should be introduced on a partnership basis with maintenance and conservation of the churches being an integral part of a people-centred approach to preservation implemented by the local community of clergy and laity;
8. Also takes note of the proposed innovative and sustainable approach to the design of new shelters using tied bamboo as a structure and requests the State Party to undertake further research needed based on data gained from small-size pilot tests as pointed out in the ESIA and HIA on the feasibility of the use of bamboo as a structural engineering element at such a scale, while also acknowledging that the provision of stabilizing anchors will be essential to mitigate the risks resulting from extreme uplift wind conditions;
9. Also requests the State Party, in order to allow final validation of the options proposed, to submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, before any decision to realize the solution is taken, the following:
 - a) Reports of additional studies recommended by the Scientific Committee (geotechnical, hydrological and other studies deemed necessary),
 - b) Results of additional research conducted on the feasibility of the use of bamboo as a structural engineering element at the required scale,
 - c) Detailed plans for the conservation measures required for each architectural group, including maintenance and monitoring measures,
 - d) The Final Preliminary Design of the canopy options for each architectural group including but not limited to the anchoring system, the water drainage system, the dismantling approach for the existing shelter, and the regular maintenance requirements for the existing and potential new shelter structures, keeping in mind that the canopies should be considered as a temporary conservation solution until more data is available for each group,
 - e) A comprehensive overview of the different components of the Ethiopian-French collaboration project including a draft timetable of planned implementation;
10. Encourages the State Party to continue the dialogue with the French authorities, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies on the

emerging bi-lateral project, to support the development of an integrated conservation plan, with a people-centred approach to conservation and management, based on long-lasting sustainable partnerships with all stakeholders involved;

11. Also urges the State Party to continue its efforts in the operationalization of the Local Advisory Committee, according to the Reserved Area regulation, and further requests State of conservation of properties WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add, p. 69 inscribed on the World Heritage List the submission of a minor boundary modification that includes all management and planning provisions for the property;
12. Further reiterates its request to the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, a Vision Statement on growth and development, in line with the 2015 Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention, that respects the OUV of the property and underpins the revised Structure Plan of Lalibela and the Local Development Plan;
13. Takes note with satisfaction of the May 2022 UNESCO assessment mission to the site, organized by the World Heritage Centre following the end of the armed conflict and encourages the State Party to implement all the recommendations of this mission;
14. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, 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 47th session.