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# State of Conservation Report

## JODENSAVANNE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE:

### JODENSAVANNE SETTLEMENT AND CASSIPORA CREEK CEMETERY, SURINAME (C 1680)

In response to World Heritage Committee Decision *45 COM 8B.50*

December 2024

## 1. Executive Summary of the report

This State of Conservation Report is the first conservation report of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site: Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery, Suriname's youngest UNESCO World Heritage Site, inscribed in September 2023. The report addresses Decision 45 COM 8B.50 of the World Heritage Committee.

The site management authority (Jodensavanne Foundation) succeeds to obtain sufficient donor funding for the management, maintenance and conservation activities of the property, although funding of the operational costs remains challenging.

The designation of a Special Protected Forest Zone has not yet been accomplished since the green area as well as the island across the Jodensavanne component part is not state owned. To give these areas the status of a Special Protected Forest Zone, the land must be public domain land. Alternative ways need to be investigated for the protection of these green areas.

Inventories of archaeological finds of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site are kept in an excel database at the office of the site management authority. In a later stage, the finds will be projected on a topographical map and/or in a Geographical Information System (GIS).

To monitor the state of conservation of the attributes of the property a set of key indicators has been identified not only to record possible impacts or changes, but also to prevent negative impacts on the two component parts.

Under the Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP II), a successor of the present PURP I a loan agreement of US\$30 million was signed on 17 June 2024 between the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the ministry of Finance. Within the component "Strategies for the Productive Use of Heritage Assets" of the PURP II Program, the following will be developed in 2025: the creation of a commercialization strategy for Jodensavanne, which will include a business plan for the self-sustainability of the property, a marketing strategy to increase attraction of visitors, and a digital archaeological archive. Under this component an integrated risk preparedness plan for the two component parts, a land-use plan, and a visitors' capacity study will also be conducted. Preparations for tendering these studies will start in January 2025.

A minor boundary modification to include the remnants of the Cassipora Creek Settlement within the boundary of the property has no priority now since it depends on future archaeological research to confirm the findings of the 2018 exploratory archaeological investigations of the Cassipora Creek Settlement to be the old Jewish Settlement preceding Jodensavanne.

Archaeological investigations conducted since 2020 on the residential history of Jewish houses and their location within the village square of Jodensavanne also indicate the existence of cultural interchange between different groups (Jewish people, slaves of African and Indigenous descent) who lived together in Jodensavanne. An interesting topic for continuous research.

A current conservation issue that may impact the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) negatively is tree fall. Nature is unpredictable and trees fell due to old age, disease or by wind gusts. Therefore, regular monitoring and inspections of trees in the direct vicinity of remnants of historic structures is essential since trees can cause material damage but also can cause harm to personnel and visitors.

The outstanding universal value of the property might be enhanced due to unearthed artifacts belonging to the

presumed military post Gelderland, the second military post of the military defense line Cordon Path which started at Jodensavanne.

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

This State of Conservation Report addresses Decision 45 COM 8B.50 of the World Heritage Committee in the following way:

### **Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4a:**

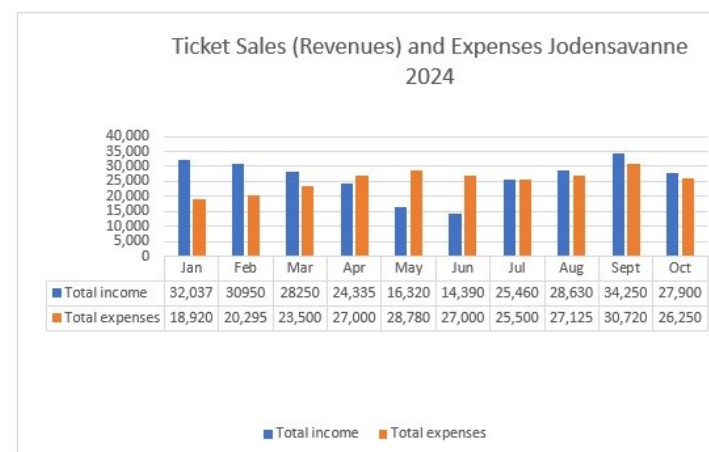
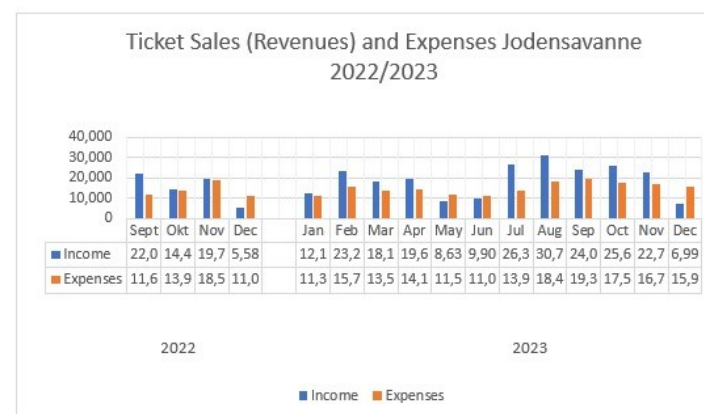
***Obtaining adequate and stable funding for the operation and maintenance of the property.***

#### Reaction of the State Party

The Foundation succeeds to obtain sufficient donor funding for management, maintenance and conservation activities. For instance, from TotalEnergies EP Suriname B.V. a grant was received for the renovation and extension of the visitors' camp at the back entrance as well as for the construction of a water supply system at the Jodensavanne Settlement. Furthermore, from the Dutch Embassy in Paramaribo a financial contribution was received to organize the 2024 Jodensavanne Archaeological Volunteer Project. As of 2023 the Jodensavanne Foundation organizes yearly a volunteer project with the aim to raise awareness among the public in general, and volunteers in particular for the conservation, promotion and protection of the Jodensavanne Archaeological World Heritage Site by carrying out archaeological excavations and maintenance and conservation activities. Information about this project can be found at the UNESCO website <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2715/>.

Regarding the operational costs, the Jodensavanne Foundation has not received government subsidies as from 2015. A subsidy of SRD 1,500.000 (ca. USD 47.000) has been requested through the Ministry of Education Science and Culture for the last quarter of 2024. Up till now several

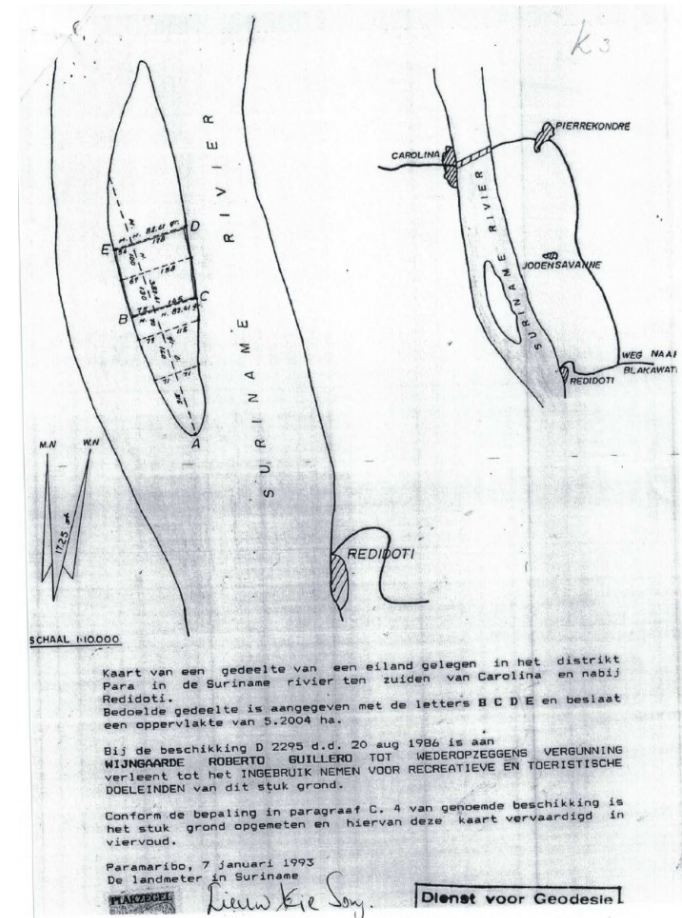
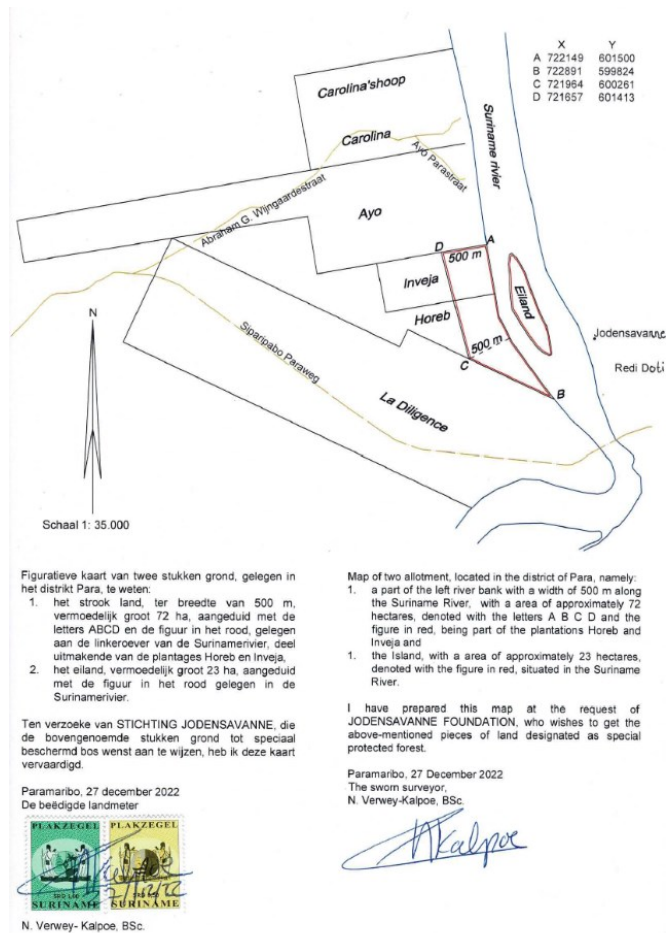
attempts (through the Cabinet of the President) to obtain a yearly subsidy for the operational and maintenance costs were not successful.



Overview Revenues (Ticket Sales) and Expenses Jodensavanne, 2022-2024

**Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4b:**

***Finalizing the designation of the Special Protected Forest zone.***



Left: Land surveyor's map of the area to be designated a Special Protected Forest Zone. Right: Land surveyor's map showing the partially issued lands on the island.



### Reaction of the State Party

The following actions have been undertaken:

The Minister of Education Science and Culture requested by letter dated 25 October 2022, ref. M-1918, her colleague of Land and Forest Management, to designate a forested area of about 3 ha. and the island across Jodensavanne as a “Special Protected Forest Zone”, based on the 1992 Forest Act.

By letter dated 10 November 2022, ref. 3060-22, the Minister of Land and Forest Management replied that a land surveyor’s map needed to be made to investigate the status of the forested area being public domain land or not.

The Jodensavanne Foundation hired a land surveyor to prepare a land surveyor’s map of the forested area and island to be designated as a special protected forested area (see map below):

The land surveyor’s map was submitted to the Minister of Land and Forest Management by letter dated 3 January 2023, ref. 0011.

The Minister of Land and Forest Management replied by letter dated 23 January 2023, ref. 0044-23 that after investigation:

Plantation Horeb has been issued to INTRAX IMPORT and EXPORT Ltd. by land resolution of 22 July 2010 No. D 8158, inscribed at the Land Registry Office MI GLIS in register C 2007 no. 9157 (Street registry # 183934).

Plantation Inveja private property is belonging to George David GOMPERTS, inscribed at the Land Registry

Office MI GLIS in register C 1449 no. 1185 (Street registry # 7023 to 7028 and 7030).

The island across Jodensavanne partly has been issued to several people, among them Roberto Guillero WIJNGAARDE by land resolution of 20 August 1986 No. D 2295. Concluding, that none of the above-mentioned land State owned land is.

Until today, the green area and the island across Jodensavanne remains green and uninhabited. The island is a low-lying swampy area making it unsuitable for habitation.

### **Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4c:**

*Preparing and/or centralizing the inventories of archaeological finds and the accompanying information and presenting this information on detailed topographical maps and/or in a Geographical Information System (GIS).*

### Reaction of the State Party

All the inventories of archaeological finds of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site are presently kept in an excel database. Archaeological excavations and their findings are documented in reports and kept at the Foundations office. The inventories are, however, not yet presented on detailed topographical maps and/or in a Geographical Information System (GIS). However, within the Second Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP II), a successor of the ongoing PURP I,

predecessor financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), a web-based digital archaeological archive (a relational database containing objects and images from different archaeological sites located throughout the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site) will be developed in 2025.

**Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4d:**

*Identifying quantifiable indicators for monitoring the state of conservation of all the attributes of the property, as well as general environmental conditions and*

*changes to its surroundings, in order to help detect long-term developments in the property and its surroundings.*

**Reaction of the State Party**

After the ICOMOS Technical Evaluation Mission from 5-9 September 2024 of the nomination of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site, additional information was provided by the State Party on request by ICOMOS. A table with key indicators was provided for monitoring the state of conservation of the attributes of the property. Below is the table.

**Key Indicators for Monitoring State of Conservation**

Indicators	Measurement	Method of measurement	Periodicity	(Preventive) Actions
<b>Threats or challenges</b>				
<b>Development Pressures</b> (Tourism, Agriculture, growth of village, Logging)	Occurrence, rate and degree of encroachment of pineapple farming, neighbouring leisure activities, logging etc. towards buffer zone and/or component part.	Field and aerial survey	Monthly	Clear and effective demarcation of component parts and buffer zones.  Enforcement of Memorandum of Cooperation.  Frequent communication with the village council and via Krutu's (village meetings).
<b>Environmental Pressures</b> (Human Factors, Visitor Behavior)	Increase of vandalism, littering	Field inspections, observations	Daily	Visiting Guidelines to minimize vandalism and other visitor impact.  Signage to influence visitor behavior.
<b>Natural disasters and risk preparedness</b>  Weathering processes, wood decay and degradation, and tree fall	Increase in the number of deteriorating wooden grave markers due to: Biological and chemical weathering, falling trees and visitor behaviour (vandalism).	Condition survey:  - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of wooden grave markers.  - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Insect pest control and conservation of wooden grave markers. Pruning of overhanging trees to allow more sunlight on the cemetery; Direct surroundings of the grave markers should be cleansed whereby organic material should be removed and savanna sand should be placed; Grave markers should carefully be placed vertically to avoid water or moisture to accumulate but rather run off quickly; Grave markers should be treated with a thin layer of paraffin or bee wax as a

				water sealer; Areas that are affected by fungi should be treated with fungicide. Termites and/or other insects should be terminated.
	Increase in the number of grave slabs with structural damage due to:  Mechanical (physical), chemical and biological weathering, fallen trees and visitor behaviour (vandalism):	Condition survey: <sup>1</sup>  - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of grave slabs.  - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	See below (preventive) actions for specific threats to grave slabs, wooden grave markers, brick structures and foundations.
	Tilting of grave slabs	Condition survey:  - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of grave slabs.  - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Tackle soil erosion.  Leveling the ground under slabs by removing uneven soil or adding soil under slabs to become horizontal again and placing them on a thin, smaller concrete slab.
	Flaking or peeling of surface of grave slabs made of natural stone (blue stone)	Condition survey:  - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of grave slabs.  - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	None. Difficult to prevent or to resolve since it is a natural process.
	Fractures and joints in grave slabs made of natural stone (blue stone)	Condition survey:  - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of grave slabs.  - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Difficult to prevent or to resolve since it is in part a natural process. It can be slowed down or stabilized by leveling tilted grave slabs and placing them on a smaller concrete slab to ease pressure on stones. Stones should lay flat as possible on the ground.
	Lichens on grave slabs	Condition survey:  - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of grave slabs.  - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Leave lichens as they are. They are not detrimental to stones. In case lichens limit the readability of the epitaph removal with water and soft brush can be considered.

<sup>1</sup> Note: Condition surveys are comprehensive assessments of the existing cultural heritage within the property. They involve visual inspections to assess possible structural damage, failure, wear/tear of remnants of brick structures, headstones/wooden grave markers and tourism infrastructure. The surveys should provide recommendations for maintenance, repairs and improvement/prevention.



	Fading of epitaphs	Condition survey: - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of grave slabs. - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Timely documentation of epitaphs while they are still readable. Fading is a natural weathering process and difficult to prevent or to resolve.
	Carbonation of Marble grave slabs	Condition survey: - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of grave slabs. - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Carbonation is an irreversible process and difficult to resolve. Tilting the marble headstone a bit to ease the runoff of rainwater may help little, but not for the deeper inscriptions.
	Uplifting of grave slabs and damage to wooden grave markers	Condition survey: - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of wooden grave markers. - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Regular tree inspections and timely removal of old, dead or dangerous overhanging trees.
	Disintegration of brick-lined graves	Condition survey: - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of the grave. - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Regular tree inspections and timely removal of old, dead or dangerous overhanging trees.
	Losing patina and natural oils of wooden grave markers	Condition survey: - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of wooden grave markers. - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Regular surface treatment.
	Increase in the structural damage to brick structures and foundations due to plant roots in plaster, tree fall or visitor behaviour.	Condition survey: - visual inspections to assess structural integrity of brick structures and foundations. - photo comparison then & now.	Bi-annually	Visiting guidelines regulate visitor behavior, timely removal of plants and roots from brick structures, identification and removal of dead and/or dangerous overhanging trees.  The Visiting Guidelines has been updated.

	Condition of the site's risk or emergency preparedness and risk control.	Number of accidents on-site  Number of tree fall	Monthly	Visual inspections assessing the physical condition of railings and outdoor stairs, identification of dead and/or dangerous overhanging trees, and assessments of forest fire risks; availability of basic emergency medical kits and certified first responders.  As of 2021 the number of removed and fallen trees are counted.
<b>Opportunities or gains</b>				
<b>Town Plan and History of Jodensavanne and Cassipora Creek component parts</b>	Knowledge gained about the component parts Town Plan and history.	Via archaeological research and/or archival research, scientific literature.	On-going	Implementation of research program (archaeological, archival)
<b>Number of Visitors</b>	Increase in ticket sales (both residents and non-residents).  Increase in tourist satisfaction  Increase in revenue sharing with community	Counting tickets sold  Visitor survey  Percentage of ticket sales shared with community	Annually  Biennially  Annually	Improve marketing and promotion of the component parts
<b>Visitor Amenities</b>	Increase in the quality and quantity of visitor amenities.	Condition survey:  - visual inspections assessing the physical condition.  - photo comparison then & now.	Annually	Regular upgrading or rehabilitating of tourism infrastructure

**Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4e:**

***Elaborating an integrated risk preparedness plan for the two component parts.***

Reaction of the State Party

This study will be financed and implemented under the Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP II), a successor of the ongoing PURP I. The PURP II program, like its predecessor, is financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and comprises a loan of US\$30 million signed on 17 June 2024 between the IDB and the

ministry of Finance on behalf of the Government of Suriname. Under component 2.04 of PURP II “Strategies for the Productive Use of Heritage Assets”, the creation of a commercialization strategy for Jodensavanne, which includes a business plan for the self-sustainability of the site, a marketing strategy to increase attraction of visitors, a digital archive program will be conducted, as well as an integrated risk preparedness plan. Preparations for tendering the studies will commence in January 2025 and implementation is scheduled for 2025. An amount of US\$ 500,000.00 is earmarked for these studies.

**Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4f:**

*Evaluating the current land use (e.g., location of visitor installations) with the objective of developing a land-use plan for the property.*

Reaction of the State Party

This study will be financed and implemented under the Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP II), a successor of the ongoing PURP I. See also paragraph 4e.

**Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4g:**

*Exploring the possibility and relevance of including additional interest groups and stakeholders in the property management process.*

Reaction of the State Party

The following groups of stakeholders are already closely involved in the management of the property and are also represented on the board of the Jodensavanne Foundation:

Two representatives of the Redi Doti Indigenous Village Council, two representatives of the Government of Suriname (Ministry of Education Science & Culture), one community member of the plantation Ayo (also with roots in Jodensavanne), one community member of the plantation Carolina (also with roots in Jodensavanne). Regarding the Surinamese Jewish community, the Chair of the Jewish community has stated during the ICOMOS Technical Evaluation Mission that the community does not have to be represented on the board per se, but that they would like to be informed about activities and projects, which is accordingly taking place.

Very recently, the Jodensavanne Foundation started to engage Indigenous Women of surrounding villages by empowering them in the development of local tourism by capitalising on the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site as an UNESCO World Heritage Site. From 1 – 5 November 2024, a five-day workshop for about 20 women from the Indigenous villages of Cassipora, Pierrekondre-Kumbasi, Powaka and Redi Doti was held. This initiative, titled “*Empowering Indigenous Women in the Para-East region of Suriname: Unlocking Tourism Potential in the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site through Skill Development and Entrepreneurship*” was organized by the Jodensavanne Foundation in collaboration with the village chiefs of the four Indigenous villages and supported by the Canada Fund. It aimed to strengthen the role of women of the Para-East region in local tourism and help them further develop their communities economically and

culturally by providing tourism-related services in and the direct surroundings of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site. During the workshop, the women learned essential skills in tourist guiding, catering, hygiene and making artisanal products. The training provided the Indigenous women the opportunity to welcome tourists, share the rich culture of their communities with the world in a sustainable way, but also to promote the Jodensavanne Archaeological World Heritage Site.

**Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4h:**

***Determining the carrying capacity of the property.***

Reaction of the State Party

This study will be financed and implemented under the Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP II), a successor of the ongoing PURP I. See also paragraph 4e.

**Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4i:**

***Further exploring the possibility of including the remains of the Cassipora Creek Settlement in the property's boundary, through a minor boundary modification request, if its location and state of conservation can be accurately determined.***

Reaction of the State Party

In due time this recommendation will be considered since future archaeological research needs to be conducted to confirm whether the findings of the 2018 exploratory archaeological investigations of the Cassipora Creek

Settlement are truly the remains of the old Jewish Settlement preceding Jodensavanne. If this is the case, a minor boundary modification will be requested. However, the archaeological research program of the Jodensavanne Foundation is presently focused on excavations around the village plaza of the Jodensavanne settlement component part.

**Decision: 45 COM 8B.50 Paragraph 4i:**

***Undertaking research on the interrelations between the different groups (Jewish people, local African descendants) that were living together in Jodensavanne in order to further the understanding of the property.***

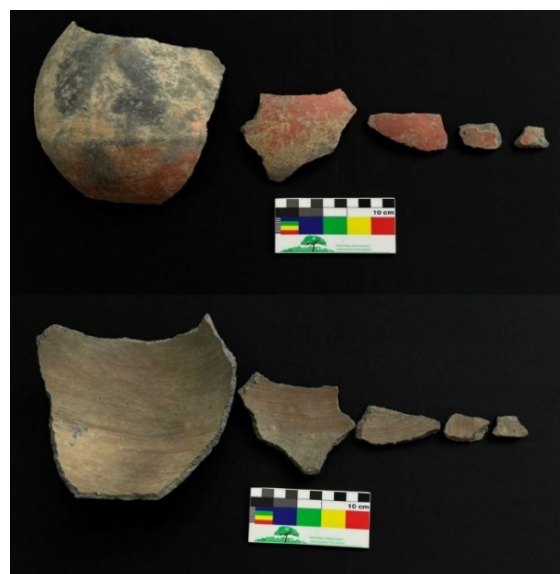
Reaction of the State Party

Jodensavanne played an important role as center for cultural exchange between the Jewish, Indigenous and enslaved Afro societies. As part of the archaeological research program of the Jodensavanne Foundation, archaeological investigations are being conducted since 2020 to study among other things the cultural interchange between different groups (Jewish people, slaves of African and Indigenous descent) who lived together in Jodensavanne. The archaeological excavation of House de Meza which took place from 2020-2022 revealed the presence of Indigenous and Maroon pottery in context with colonial artifacts, indicating the use of utensils of the Indigenous and slaves by both Jewish and other groups living in Jodensavanne.

Also, the 2023-2024 excavation of a cooking house located about 20 meters of the remnants of House de Meza where many Indigenous soft paste ceramics were found together in

the same layer with colonial artifacts both inside and outside of the cooking house, indicate a close relationship between the different groups living together at Jodensavanne. Cooking houses fulfilled besides serving as vital centers for food preparation, also an important role in the cultural exchange. In cooking houses local ingredients and cooking techniques influenced by African, Indigenous and European culinary traditions were utilized. Therefore, cooking houses played a significant role in social gatherings and community bonding, as the act of cooking brought people together to share meals and stories. The material evidence, including archaeological finds, can shed light into the cultural exchange, the historical culinary practices through phytolith analysis, and the architectural history.

Traditionally, cooking houses were considered female spaces. Enslaved women played a vital role in cooking houses, often assuming the primary responsibility for meal preparation. They cooked for the household, including the owners and their families or for special occasions. Given their roles and status within colonial society, cooking houses were typically situated apart from the main residence. This separation sometimes afforded the enslaved women a certain degree of autonomy, allowing them to manage the cooking house and interact with other enslaved individuals, Jews or other people while they worked. During the archaeological investigation of the remnants of the first cooking house at Jodensavanne to be excavated many clay pipes and pipe stem were found, indicating that smoking by enslaved women was common practice. Tobacco and pipes were regularly provided to slaves by their Jewish owners.



Top: A stone mortar and a cluster of Indigenous soft past pottery sherds found in 1 layer of the cooking house. Bottom: Indigenous soft paste ceramic sherds collected in the North trench of the cooking house.



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

**Reaction of the State Party**

The Jodensavanne Archaeological Site is located in a forested area and tree fall can form a threat to the remnants of the two component parts. Nature is unpredictable, trees can fell due to old age, disease or by wind gusts. Therefore, regular monitoring and inspections of trees in the direct vicinity of the remnants is essential. Dangerous overhanging trees can cause material damage when toppled, but also can cause harm to personnel and visitors. Hence, they are being monitored

closely and/or removed. The Management Authority (Jodensavanne Foundation) maintains a database since 2021 of fallen trees and their impact on the remnants of the component parts.



Fallen trees. From left to right: access road near Beth Haim Jodensavanne, access road towards synagogue, and path towards medicinal spring.



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.

#### Reaction of the State Party

During pipe laying excavation activities at Jodensavanne in early September 2024 by the Surinamese Water Company Ltd., many artifacts (427 in total) were uncovered. According to a first analysis and interpretation, the location where the artifacts were collected is most likely the military post Gelderland, the second post of the military defence line Cordon Path, which started at Jodensavanne. Post Gelderland was a Sergeant's post about 1 km from the village plaza. For long it was assumed that this post was located near the junction with the Cordon path and the main road to the

Indigenous villages of Pierrekondere/Kumbasi and Redi Doti, while the military post is most probably much closer, namely within the property. Future archaeological research will confirm whether the finds are those of the military post Gelderland. If this is the case, it will enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the property since it will have a new attribute within its borders.



Map of the area east of the Suriname River, 1782-1784, J.F. Wollant in coll. Atlas Mutual Heritage



A selection of artifacts collected at the presumed military post Gelderland. From top to bottom, left to right: a ceramic sherd picturing a soldier, soft paste Indigenous pottery, a wrought iron window latch lock and clay pipes.

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

The State Party grants its consent to upload this State of Conservation Report for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System.