

Progress Report

The Royal Tombs of Joseon Dynasty

January 2025

Executive Summary

The State Party would like to provide the World Heritage Center with information on the state of conservation of the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty based on January 2025 through this progress report, as requested in Decision 46COM 7B.40.

First, regarding the final ruling related to the three apartment complex construction companies in the vicinity of Jangneung (W6) cluster, the Supreme Court concluded the case by dismissing the appeal. Despite efforts and appeals to protect heritage values, the Korea Heritage Service (KHS) lost all three rulings. The State Party would like to reiterate that this is the result of a rare combination of events with few precedents within the systematic framework. Nonetheless, the State Party recognized the magnitude of development threats to World Heritage values, accepting the concerns and recommendations of the World Heritage Committee by strengthening the domestic framework to prevent cases from further occurring. Such efforts include but not limits to; the implementation of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) based on the amendment of the Special Act on Conservation, Management, and Utilization of World Heritage, alongside the operation of KHS Special Task Force (TF) and Standing Advisory Committee (SAC). KHS will continue its endeavors for the protection of the Outstanding Universal Values (OUVs) with the cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

Regarding other conservation issues involving Seooreung (W1, specifically, Changneung Royal Tomb) and Taereung (M3) Clusters, Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) are currently in progress and the final results will determine the future plan and direction of the project.

The State Party is consistently communicating with parties of interest upon the retention of certain buildings in the Taereung National Training Center (Taereung NTC) in connection with the restoration of Taereung (M3). In response to the

recommendations of ICOMOS, the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee (KSOC) is preparing a demolition plan, master plan, and future use plan for the existing facilities, which will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee for review by the State Party once the study is completed. Regarding the relocation of the Korea National University of Arts (K-Arts) in Uireung (M5) Seoul, the first phase of restoration of the demolished area has been completed, as committed by the State Party at the time of inscription, and the remaining building, which is currently used as a school, will be demolished in stages following the preparation of a relocation plan for the site.

As noted in the previous three State of Conservation (SOC) reports, the State Party remains committed to raising awareness, preserving, and promoting the value of the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty, and will continue to work closely with the World Heritage Committee and advisory bodies. In March 2025, the State Party will invite a Joint Reactive Monitoring Mission to verify the conservation status of the 18 clusters of the World Heritage and strengthen its conservation strategies.