



International Technical Meeting on the future of the Bamiyan World Heritage Property

The “International Technical Meeting on the future of the Bamiyan World Heritage Property” was held in Salalah, Oman from December 3 to 5, 2018. It was organized by the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, GUtech University of Technology in Muscat, UNESCO and RIO – Research Centre Indian Ocean, with the financial assistance from the Government of Japan and in close cooperation with the Office of the Adviser for Cultural Affairs to His Majesty the Sultan and ICOMOS Oman. The final meeting agenda and participants’ list are in attachment (Annex 1).

The participants to this technical meeting,

Considering the particular importance of the Bamiyan World Heritage property for the people of Afghanistan and the humankind;

Acknowledging the generous and long-term engagement of international donors to the safeguarding of the Bamiyan property, in particular the ongoing support of the European Union, Italy, Japan and the Republic of Korea;

Reiterating the Decision 31 COM 7A. 21 by the World Heritage Committee at its 31st session in 2007, which set a series of benchmarks to achieve a “Desired State of Conservation” that would enable the removal of the Bamiyan property from the List of World Heritage in Danger;

Acknowledging the Decision of the previous sessions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the Bamiyan property,

Also acknowledging the Recommendation of the 14th Expert Working Group Meeting for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage Property, held in Japan in 2017;

Taking note of the ongoing debates on the issue on recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage;

Referring to the ICOMOS Salalah Guidelines for the Management of Public Archaeological Sites, adopted at the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly in India, in December 2017;

Also referring to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols;

Session 1 – Current status of the Bamiyan World Heritage property

1.1 Suggest that all the technical information produced by experts, agencies and UNESCO be centralized and shared as a single system by the Government of Afghanistan, notably the Ministry of Information and Culture, and encourage coordination with relevant Ministries and the local Bamiyan government in this regard;

1.2 Recommend that the inventory and documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Bamiyan be conducted and integrated into a database of the national and local government;

1.3 Recommend that all issues regarding illegal construction and land acquisition within the World Heritage property and buffer zones be coordinated between the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Urban Development and the Lands, , the Ministry of Finance and the local government in Bamiyan, to ensure protection of the property;

1.4 Recommend that a Management Plan be established, and within it a relevant governance system;

Session 2 – Favouring the sustainable development of the Bamiyan Valley

2.1 Take note that the Bamiyan Strategic Master Plan has been approved by the President of Afghanistan and recommend that the Plan be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review of its advisory body;

2.2 Take also note that the Strategic Master Plan includes a traffic plan component and a bypass road, and that this requires further technical, geological and economic feasibility studies, including Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments in accordance with national rules and regulations;

2.3 Remind that in 2018, the Afghan authorities received the evaluation on the stone-paved road project by ICOMOS through UNESCO, and recommend to examine the project in due time against the concept of the future Bamiyan Archaeological Park, and further recommend that prior to the implementation of any construction activities these recommendations be taken into account;

2.4 Recommend the use of accurate GIS-based cultural mapping information, such as the one prepared for the Cultural Master Plan, for future development plans in Bamiyan (and not that from the 2003 map used for the nomination dossier of the World Heritage List, which is outdated);

Session 3 – Potential Rehabilitation of the Eastern Buddha Statue

3.1 Welcome the authorities' decision and the detailed Action Plan (Annex 2) prepared by the national technical working committee, which resulted from the international meeting on "The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations and Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value", held in Tokyo in September 2017; and support the authorities' plan in further investigating the four technical proposals presented at the same 2017 Tokyo meeting;

3.2 Underline, in the meantime, the importance of a proper preservation of the Buddha statue fragments;

Session 4 – Management of the Bamiyan World Heritage site – opportunities and challenges

4.1 Acknowledge the current Government's efforts to revise the 2004 National Law for the Protection of Cultural and Historical Properties, which should respect the provisions of the international cultural conventions, and recommend accelerating the adoption of the revised law and adopting further regulations and guidelines for the protection and promotion of the Bamiyan World Heritage property;

4.2 Acknowledge that the Government of Afghanistan, through the Ministry of Information and Culture and other relevant national and local institutions, is securing national budget to manage the Bamiyan World Heritage property and recommend further efforts to ensure proper financial and human resources to address future challenges;

4.4 Encourage the Government of Afghanistan to promote outreach activities for an enhanced interpretation of the World Heritage property, in order to provide information on tangible, moveable and intangible heritage related to the property, notably by using the Bamiyan Cultural Centre;

4.5 Acknowledge the need for a museum in Bamiyan and for an archaeological park for the interpretation and presentation of the World Heritage property;

4.6 Suggest that the results of workshops relating to the Bamiyan World Heritage property be included in the state of conservation report, so that they can be evaluated by UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies;

Session 5 – Roundtable on donor initiatives in Bamiyan

5.1 Appreciate past and ongoing generous financial support to the Bamiyan World Heritage property by international donors, and strongly encourages that such financial support continues into the future;

5.2 Note the Government of Afghanistan's sincere appreciation to the Government of Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation concerning the project for the Preservation and Promotion of the Bamiyan Valley through Culture-Oriented Sustainable Development, and to the Government of Japan for considering the possibility to continue providing financial support to safeguard the Bamiyan World Heritage property.