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# **World Heritage Patrimoine mondial**

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
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POUR L'EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD  
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DU PATRIMOINE  
MONDIAL, CULTUREL ET NATUREL

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE / COMITE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

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**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda:** State of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and/or on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

**Point 7 de l'Ordre du jour provisoire:** Etat de conservation de biens inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et/ou sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril

MISSION REPORT / RAPPORT DE MISSION

Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) (708)  
Monuments historiques de Mtskheta (Géorgie) (708)

FROM 10 TO 15 NOVEMBER 2014

This mission report should be read in conjunction with Document:  
Ce rapport de mission doit être lu conjointement avec le document suivant:

WHC-15/39.COM/ 7A

**REPORT ON THE JOINT ICOMOS/ICCROM  
REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION TO  
HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA (GEORGIA)**



**FROM 10 TO 15 NOVEMBER 2014**

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**REPORT ON THE JOINT ICOMOS / ICCROM  
REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION TO  
HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA (GEORGIA)**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The members of the mission are extremely grateful to the authorities of Georgia and representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Development and Finance, for their hospitality, and warm welcome and availability. The members of the mission would like to convey their gratitude especially to Mr Nikoloz Antidze, the Director General of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation (NACHP), Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia, and to Ms Rusudan Mirzikashvili, Head of the UNESCO and International Relations Unit of the (NACHP) for their kindness, availability and for organizing this complex joint mission and facilitating the meetings with various experts, local officials and stakeholders and provided important background information and detailed explanations, as well as facilitating site visits.

Special thanks go to all the staff of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

Particular thanks go to the Georgian National Commission for UNESCO and its Secretary-General Ms Ketevan Kandelaki, who continuously supported and accompanied the mission team to the World Heritage properties.

The members of the mission would like to express their thanks to all members of the Centre for Architecture, Restoration and Arts of the Patriarchate of Georgia, for their active participation in the meeting and presentation.

The members of the mission would also like to extend their thanks to Mr Ahmed Eiweida, Sector Leader for Sustainable Development of the World Bank Office in South Caucasus (WB) and to Mrs Tina Lebanidze, Assistant to the WB for their availability and who also provided important background information.

Particular thanks go to WHC representative, Ms Marie-Noël Tournoux, Programme Specialist CLT/WHC/EUR (CFU), for the useful and constructive exchange of views and comments upon the problems faced by the property.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

At its 38<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, 15-25 June 2014), the World Heritage Committee examined the state of conservation of the WH property the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) and decided to request the State Party to invite a joint ICOMOS/ICCROM reacting monitoring mission to assess progress achieved in implementing necessary corrective measures in order to reach the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The ICOMOS and ICCROM representatives undertook the mission to the property from 11 to 15h November 2014. A UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC) representative joined the mission at the request of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

The summary conclusions and key recommendations of the mission are as follows:

- The joint ICOMOS/ICCROM mission expresses its serious concern about the continuing proposed urban development and construction works on the Aragvi and Mtgvari rivers banks which are starting to pose a threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.
- The mission reiterates the Committee's decision request to finalize and adopt an agreed Urban Land-Use Master Plan, including zoning regulations with particular emphasis on the establishment of no-construction zones, strict limits to development rights and a conservation master plan and taking into consideration the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, its specific landscape setting, as well as important views and connection lines, as an agreed framework for new development;
- The mission reiterates the Committee's decision that the State Party should submit a minor boundary modification proposal for a unified buffer zone of the property to enhance the protection of the property and to allow a clear understanding of the archaeological and visually sensitive areas around the property through managing the area as a cultural landscape, and the mission also supports the possibility of a minor boundary modification to enlarge slightly the exiting tight boundaries of the individual components of the property;
- The mission concluded that while the State Party has made significant progress in implementing the corrective measures regarding the historical monuments, the recommendations of the 2010 and 2012 missions and the Committee's decisions regarding the surrounding areas have been ignored and no attempt has been made to prevent further inappropriate construction and development projects, nor to preserve the panorama along the rivers, which should be treated as a recreational cultural landscape.
- Regarding the new public building constructions on the Aragvi river bank, it is recommended that the State Party stop further new construction activity and proceed with a design of the wider setting as cultural-natural recreation area,

that includes high trees around the recently erected new buildings. The mission recommends that this landscape design should be submitted, along with any proposed development projects, to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, for review by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, before any commitment has been made.

- The mission underlines that the spatial, historical, and spiritual relationships that diachronically characterized the positioning of the main components of the property in the spectacular natural landscape should be given serious consideration in the Master Plan under preparation, and that these visual and other associations should be safeguarded from spontaneous and unplanned development, as well as archaeological areas. Overall the property and its setting should be managed as a cultural landscape.
- The mission underlines that it is essential to maintain the dominating presence of the historical monuments over Mtskheta City, as well as its connection with an unspoiled natural environment, in the future. A more effective monitoring mechanism should be developed in the Master Plan regarding the control of volumes, heights and views of any new town buildings.
- The mission assessed progress on the development of the Management Plan of the property within the framework of the international assistance received by the Georgian authorities, as well as the progress in the establishment of a clear institutional coordination mechanism within the framework of the new Law on Cultural Heritage Protection of Georgia, involving all stakeholders concerned.
- The mission warmly welcomes all city-planning and architecture steps taken by the State Party to enhance the quality of life of residents of the historic part of the city, while stressing the need for new constructions to be compatible with the historic heritage of the property.
- Development on the “Pikris Gora” hill area should be carried out in accordance with the protective zones of Mtskheta historic town. Within the area which is included within the Buffer Zone, any development should be forbidden. The development within the area which is not registered as archaeological protected zone should not destroy the landscape value, while any land works should be carried out under archaeological supervision. It is necessary to leave the highest point of the hill undeveloped within 20 m. radius, in order not to destroy its importance for the overall Mtskheta landscape, and its visual connection with Jvari monastery and hill.
- The mission prepared a preliminary technical report including the conclusions on the base of which the document on the state of conservation and the draft decision were prepared to the attention of the World Heritage Committee.
- The mission recommends to the World Heritage Committee **to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

## **1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION**

### **1.1 Justification of the mission**

At its 33rd session (Seville, 2009), the World Heritage Committee decided to inscribe the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Decision 33COM 8C.1).

At its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), the World Heritage Committee decided to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger, adopted the Desired State of Conservation for the property for its future removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as the corrective measures and the timeframe for their implementation.

At its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), the World Heritage Committee decided to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger and requested the State Party to invite a joint reactive monitoring mission to the property to assess the progress in the implementation of the corrective measures.

On 31 January 2012 the State Party submitted a detailed state of conservation report that addresses progress with the implementation of the corrective measures, including conservation work at the Jvari Monastery, surveys of the Svctitskhoveli Cathedral, clarification of boundaries, and progress with the Management Plan. Details are also provided regarding a proposed visitor centre at the Jvari Monastery.

At its 38<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, 15-25 June 2014), the World Heritage Committee examined the state of conservation of the WH property the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) and decided to request the State Party to invite a joint ICOMOS/ICCROM reacting monitoring mission in order to assess the progress achieved in implementing all corrective measures in order to reach the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. The ICOMOS and ICCROM representatives undertook the mission to Tbilisi and Mtskheta, Georgia from 11th to 15th November 2014. UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC) representative joined the mission at the request of the NACHPG.

The mission, conducted by Professor Dr. Alkiviades Prepis, ICOMOS representative, and Mr. Joseph King, ICCROM Director of the Sites Unit, met with all stakeholders regarding the property, namely with the representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Georgian Apostolic Autocephaly Orthodox Church, Mtskheta City Authorities and the site managers, as well as with Mr Ahmed Eiweida, Sector Leader for Sustainable Development of the World Bank Office in South Caucasus.

Thanks to the excellent organization of the field trips by the NACHPG, the joint ICOMOS / ICCROM RMM had the opportunity to visit the three components of the *Historical Monuments of Mtskheta* World Heritage Site (WHS), the surrounding areas and urban environment, as well as to see the property at a distance from several viewpoints. This helped substantially to perceive the context and setting for the

development in the historic core of the city and its setting during the recent period of two years (from the last joint WHC/ICOMOS RMM).

It was very useful for the RMM to join Ms Marie-Noël Tournoux, Program Specialist CLT/WHC/EUR (CFU), the representative of WHC, and share views with her and benefit from the background information provided by the NACHPG and representatives from the Georgian ministries and local authorities.

The National Commission of UNESCO was present at most meetings.

## **2. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY**

The historical city of Mtskheta represents a complex, multi-layer character, which implies a unity between:

- archaeological stratigraphy with large chronological span and with high value findings,
- significant medieval monuments spread in different places around, and
- the architectural-construction layers of the traditional part of the town – all set meaningfully through a diachronic, long-term “dialog” within a majestic natural landscape, integrated with historical-cultural values.

### **2.1. Urban Land-Use Master Plan / Management Plan**

1) The 2003 *Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan*, an UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, prepared with the collaboration of Georgian authorities and specialists, had outlined the general lines for the tourist development of the city. This study was being used to guide short and long term decision making for the site. But it was never accepted as an official document by the State Party. In January 2007, the Mtskheta Heritage Integrated Management Commission was instituted within the Mtskheta Municipality to better coordinate at local level the “sustainable and integrated conservation and management of the cultural heritage located on the territory of Mtskheta”. However, and despite the constant financial support for this purpose, up to now the Management Plan continues to be under “constant elaboration”, with practically no effective implementation in the property.

2) The general impression of the mission is that in the recent past there has not been an influential and effective control of new buildings by the previous Local Authorities. This impression is accentuated by the fact that a series of new buildings (private and, even more, public) have been erected within the very sensitive historic landscape setting - contrary to the recommendations by previous WHC/ICOMOS missions that the property is an ensemble of religious monuments which has a close relationship to its landscape setting and which needs to be managed as a cultural landscape, with special attention being given to the empty area of the Aragvi river bank.

3) Regarding the Urban Land – Use Master Plan under elaboration by the Local Authorities:

- The cultural heritage of Georgia is considered to have high potential for the economic development of the country. A new Law on Cultural Heritage Protection is being prepared which will be validated for the whole country and will incorporate all previous laws. The main cultural heritage policy document is being developed in parallel with the action plan for its implementation policy. Referring to the last, it is encouraging that past mistakes are being taken into account.

- In 2014 the State Party has developed an initiative for collaboration with UNESCO for the development of an Urban Land-Use Master Plan based on the new Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage Protection. The preparation of the Master Plan is funded by Georgia within the framework of the Third Regional Development Project (supported by the World Bank). The Master Plan will provide the basic directions for the city's future development as well as a reorganization of existing services. The final elaboration of the document of the Master Plan is planned to be finished by the end of 2017.

## **2.2. Management system**

The mission notes that till recently an effective cooperation between Ministries, the NACHP, Local Community, the Church, institutions and various stakeholders remained a challenge. There was no institutionalised substantive dialogue especially between the Georgian Orthodox Church and the relevant Ministries. After the end of 2014 it is foreseen that an inter-ministerial Committee will be formed that will be responsible for developing policies on the most important issues of cultural monuments, including those of the cultural World Heritage. This Committee will be under the auspice of the Ministry of Culture and will be led by the Deputy Minister of Culture. This Committee will participate institutionally with the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation etc. and the Georgian Orthodox Church will also take part. Thus, there will be a coordination system to allow cooperation between all relevant bodies that, hitherto mostly had separate agendas and different approaches. The Committee will have a separate secretariat and the meetings will be organized on a regular basis.

The participation of the Church in this Committee will be ensured through a Memorandum on Collaboration on Cultural Heritage Issues between the Georgian Apostolic Orthodox Church and the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia (the unofficial translation of this document is attached). It is highly encouraging that already a harmonious cooperation has been established between the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation and the Architectural, Art and Restoration Council of the Patriarchate.

This inter-ministerial Committee will address the definitive establishment of an overall unified landscape buffer zone around the inscribed monuments, as well as regulations concerning the repair of old and construction of new buildings in the historic core of Mtskheta.

### 3. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

#### 3.1. Problems identified in the properties

- **Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Church**

##### Complex exterior

The stone-built facade of the historic gate - the main entrance to the church complex - has been cleaned in the previous spots of melted wax left by believers' candles. Maintenance and partial restoration problems of the building blocks of the gate – still remain to be addressed. The conservation and restoration of the surrounding defensive wall, as well as the final arrangement of the perimeter moat, has been completed only on the west and south sides. On the other sides, the work is still in progress (*photos: Svetitskhoveli 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7*).

##### Complex interior yard

The peaceful settlement of the inner courtyard of the complex allows visitors the opportunity to view from a proper distance the magnificent nature of the monument, its gigantic dimensions and its imposing presence as the religious-spiritual centre of medieval Georgia. Access to the upper part of the walls has been completed (*photos: Svetitskhoveli 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16*).

##### Cathedral exterior

Full renovation of the system for the collection and removal of rainwater from the church roof has been realized. (*photos: Svetitskhoveli 17, 18*)

Conservation problems of the building fabric are obvious, especially the corrosion caused by long term problems of moisture in the lower part (visible basement – *crepidoma*) of the church. A maintenance programme for the conservation and protection of the building stones is a necessity and World Heritage Center could provide technical assistance through ICCROM. (*photos: Svetitskhoveli 19, 20, 21, 22, 23*).

Cracks on the church facades should be addressed within the framework of the general study for the static strengthening of the building (see below) (*photo: Svetitskhoveli 24*).

##### Cathedral interior

Continuing improvements to the preservation, presentation and visiting route inside the church must be underlined:

- a protection corridor around the stone pulpit prevents believers from touching the historical frescoes on its facades;
- construction details from the earlier phases of the church history have been disclosed and highlighted locally in an appropriate manner;
- conservation of the murals.

Measures still need to be undertaken for the protection, preservation and presentation of the interior religious objects (for example - the bishopric painted stone throne) (*photos: Svetitskhoveli 25, 26, 27, 28*).

A full study of the analysis of the existing conditions and the static strengthening of the construction system of the church has already been completed by Prof. G. Croci's studio. The budget for this work is large and funding sources, both from government agencies and from private sponsors, are being sought. Considering that the work is not urgently needed for the carrying capacity of the building, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation has the opinion that there is some time available, so that the project could be realized in phases. (*photos: Svetitskhoveli 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34*).

- **Samtavro Nunnery**

The visit to the nunnery proved that humidity problems caused by the old covering of the building have been definitively eliminated: a new system for the removal of rainwater from the roof of the church has successfully been installed. Infrastructure facilities for tourists are under construction in the church backyard, in accordance with the ecclesiastical authorities' project, submitted and approved by the World Heritage Centre (*photos: Samtavro Nunnery 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6*). However outstanding stone corrosion problems at the base of the monument, remain to be addressed. (*photos: Samtavro Nunnery 7, 8, 9, 10*).

- **Samtavro Valley** (*photo: General view - E*)

Archaeologically, Samtavro Valley represents a settlement and a necropolis of the earlier Bronze Era - Early Iron Age and the Late Antique Age (II-IV centuries AD), that developed until the Feudal Era. Its archaeological study began at the end of the 1860s (in the XIX century BP) and continued until recently. It is considered to be the most important burial area of the Caucasus region. Regular archaeological works began in 1938, as a result of which, tombs dated to the II century BC-VIII century AD and habitats dated of to the VIII-VII centuries BC and to the earlier middle age centuries have been discovered.

During recent years works to organise and protect the site have been carried out. The site has been cleaned, a new metallic fence has been installed around it, old scrap cars have been removed, and a control and information point has been built at the entrance (*photos: Samtavro valley 1, 2, 3, 4*).

It is highly encouraging that during the last few years an archaeological education programme has been developed aimed at school children, following the 2010 ICOMOS mission recommendations, and that this continues to receive wide response from the schools of the region (*photos: Samtavro valley 5, 6*).

Remarks:

1) No further archaeological excavations have been undertaken in the area, although the graves are visible outside and inside the hill soil or could be found at a depth of 0,50 m. (*photos: Samtavro valley 7, 8, 9*).



2) Remnants of tombs, as well as of walls, ovens and hobs belonging to prehistoric residential complexes, continue to remain in urgent need of conservation and better presentation (*photos: Samtavro valley 10, 11, 12, 13*).

3) The facilities at the entrance of the site (printed information material, guide / a place for refreshment (soft drinks, café, water) / box office, first aid kit) could be further developed.

- **Jvari Monastery** (*photos: Jvari monastery 1, 2, 3, 4*)

Over the last years partial restoration and conservation of the masonry of the church and of the ruins of the medieval monastery have contributed significantly to its preservation and general appearance. (*photos: Jvari monastery 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10*).

The 3-year programme for the conservation of the monumental reliefs on the east side of the church, which was realized by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation in collaboration with ICCROM, has been completed successfully. Three major reliefs on the east apse of the church were conserved, together with cornice parts of the windows on the same apse (*photos: Jvari monastery 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16*).

Remarks:

1) Urgent conservation problems of the historical relief plaques on other sides of the church remain to be addressed. Erosion of the reliefs under the difficult winter weather conditions is tending to remove any relevant historical information (*photos: Jvari monastery 17, 18, 19*).

2) It is absolutely necessary for an extensive project to be developed that aims to conserve the building stones on the facades of the church and especially on the visible basement of the church (*crepidoma*) which have suffered considerably from unfavourable weather conditions. (*photos: Jvari monastery 20, 21*).

3) Additionally, moisture and building stone conservation problems were detected inside the church and need to be addressed. (*photos: Jvari monastery 20, 21, 22*).

4) Big telecommunication antennas were noted installed near the monument and in direct visual contact with it (*photo: Jvari monastery 23*)

#### **Problems identified around and in contact with the buffer zones of the property**

- **Mtskheta city – Historical core**

The current picture of the historic city centre has changed drastically over the last years. This was highlighted by the 2012 WHC/ICOMOS mission and can be confirmed by this joint ICOMOS/ICCROM mission.

- The main street in the city centre has been developed and has gained a new appearance (*photos: Mtskheta city 1a-1b*).

- The main square before the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Church has gained new appearance and new life (*photos: Mtskheta city 2a-2b, 3*).
- Almost all buildings in the historic centre have received new roofs, and a “facade-and-volume beautification”. All buildings in the historical core have re-tiled fences and new wooden gates placed along the streets (*photos: Mtskheta city 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12*).
- New buildings have been erected in places where vacant parcels of land or missing parts of buildings have been in the past (*photos: Mtskheta city - Houses as in 2010 and 2014*).
- The buildings on the eastern boundary of the historic core of the city, along the Aragvi river, which were highly degraded, have been completely renovated. A new street has been opened along the eastern boundary of the historic core of the city leading to the Soviet period residential buildings, providing a promenade in contact with the landscape protection area and with wonderful views to Jvari hill. However, this view was later blocked by the construction of new governmental buildings just on the other side of the street, on the empty river bank area (*photos: Mtskheta city 13, 14, 15, 16*).
- Pedestrian zones have been established within the city historic core, the traffic has been rationalized and specific parking areas have been established. The equipment of pedestrian zones is exceptionally well organized with street lighting poles, atm, garbage bins, public toilets etc. (*photos: Mtskheta city 17, 18, 19*).
- The electricity supply network has been placed underground (*photos: Mtskheta city 20a-20b*).

Of course all these facts should be evaluated positively in comparison to the situation that existed 15 years ago in the historic town (when *Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan* was elaborated by UNESCO and UNDP) and undoubtedly have improved the living conditions of the inhabitants. In addition, the picture impressed by a stranger visiting the historic city centre is the image of an organized historical residential complex. The number of rooms to let, as well as the number of service outlets, has significantly increased in comparison with the past years (*photos: Mtskheta city 21, 22, 23*).

Nevertheless, special observations can be expressed on the above:

- The facades of old buildings have drastically changed following a kind of local “facadism”, so that no one today can recognize their previous form. , - The results are not convincing even though this “facade-and-volume beautification” has been undertaken following a thorough architectural study (typological, morphological, structural etc.), reflecting local traditional architectural features and constructing methods. Visitors cannot readily identify to what extent the current internal image of the city represents the old traditional one (*photos: Mtskheta city 23a-23b, 24a-24b-24c / along the Mtkvari river bank - photos: Mtskheta city, From Armaztsikhe - Cathedral and eastern part of city, as in mid 19<sup>th</sup> c., 2001 and 2014*).

- The need of hiding the gas pipes is still evident. A cable TV system should be installed, removing the numerous private satellite installations. (*Mtskheta city 25*)

- More important are a number of interventions which are out of the scale and the character of the historic town. These interventions can be categorized as follows:

a) by the governmental agency (e.g. the "monumental" tourist information building, just before the entrance of Svetitskoveli Cathedral Church (*Map1 – 4, photos: Mtskheta city 257a-27b-27c, compare with 27d-27e*))

b) a number of private modern buildings whose volume, morphology and use of modern materials are incompatible with the character of the historic city centre (*Map1 – 1,2,3,7 and photos: Mtskheta city 28, 29 and New building No 3*)

The main point is that all the above-mentioned new interventions are readily visible from the archaeological site of Armaztsikhe hill (*photos: General views - View from Armaztsikhe hill 1, 2*)

- **Mtskheta city – New building construction**

(*photos: General views - View from Jvari hill / View from Armaztsikhe hill / Map1 / Map 2*)

#### A. New building construction

On 27 October 2006, the Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport and the Minister of Economic Development issued the joint Order n° 3/471 – 1-1/1243 “On the Definition of the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones in Mtskheta”. This joint Order provided for the establishment of a series of zones to better focus protection in the territory of Mtskheta, including a Landscape Protection Zone, which was established to protect the “*historically formed landscape as an indissoluble natural and cultural phenomenon*”.

However, the 2012 joint WHC/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission noted the start of construction of public and private buildings on the right bank of Aragvi River, an area that is included within the borders of the Mtskheta landscape protection zone (2006) (see: submitted Management Plan - Map 2.19) and within the borders of the Area of proposed visual protection according to the submitted Management Plan (Map 2.23). These buildings have now been completed in this “sensitive” riverine zone. The buildings are visible from both Jvari hill and Armaztsikhe hills. The joint 2012 mission was not provided with any official information on these developments and neither has the World Heritage Centre been notified in line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. (*series of photos: Historical development on Aragvi river bank*)

Through the creation of a “new administrative town-centre” in this area, the historical perspective and the natural connection of Svetitskhoveli medieval cathedral with Jvari church on the hill will be broken, a relationship established over the last 10 centuries.

The breaking of the natural continuity will break the intangible link between man and nature in the setting with impacts on authenticity in terms of the ability of the property to convey its value.

The public buildings, especially, are characterized by the fact that they are heterogeneous in terms of morphology, construction materials, volumetric synthesis and layout. Taken together, they recall samples of different kind of “contemporary” architecture and reflect patchy city-planning. Their scale has nothing whatsoever to do with the traditional scale of the city's buildings, creating, additionally, a visual barrier to Jvari hill, just on the border area between the historic city and the Aragvi river bank. (*photos: New development on Aragvi river bank1, 2*)

- The Police Station building with double semi-circular volumes formed by large glass surfaces is what dominates the riverine zone and is defiantly visible from both Jvari and Armaztsikhe hills. This newly-created landmark of the old Mtskheta city, lies between the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and Jvari cathedral / hill (*photos: General views: View from Jvari hill – 12 / View from Armaztsikhe hill 1 – 12 / Map1 – 12 / photos: New development on Aragvi river bank: Police Station 1, 2, 3*)

- The Town Hall, is in the shape of double truncated pyramids with curved sides. The horizontal metal strips covering the facades make it completely enclosed, since they do not allow seeing anything from the interior to the surrounding area, not even to the wonderful view of the Jvari hill. During the 2012 joint WHC/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission the model of the building was noted, while its construction had already started – for which no explanation was then given (*photos: General views: View from Jvari hill – 9 / View from Armaztsikhe hill 1 – 9 / Map1 – 9 / photos: New development on Aragvi river bank: Town Hall, Town Hall model*)

- The National Intellectual Property Centre of Georgia, with large glass surfaces and emblematic entrance (*photos: General views: View from Jvari hill – 10 / View from Armaztsikhe hill 1 – 10 / Map1 – 10, photos: New development on Aragvi river bank: Intellectual Property Center 1, 2*)

- A private residential complex fully constructed, the houses of which have already been purchased by individuals (*photos: General views: View from Jvari hill – 8 / Map1 – 8 / photo: New development on Aragvi river bank: Private residential complex*)

#### B. Remains of two buildings within the same river landscape area

Construction of the two buildings started (as they were granted authorization by the local authorities), but recently their construction was stopped.

- The first of these was to become the House of Justice. The base, some columns, and a bearing wall - all made of reinforced concrete - are still in situ. (*photos: General views: View from Jvari hill – 11 / Map1 – 11 / photo: New development on Aragvi river bank: Remains of House of Justice building*).

- The second is a circular composition of private houses for sale ("Villa Mtskheta"). The basis (made of reinforced concrete), columns and bearing walls of cement

blocks are maintained in situ. It is unknown whether this construction has been finally or provisionally stopped (*photos: General views: View from Jvari hill – 9a / Map1 – 9a / photos: New development on Aragvi river bank: “Villa Mtskheta” 1, 2*).

C. Group of buildings planned to be constructed (ready-made plans).

- **The Municipal Market:** the model of which is posted on the spot, is on the west side of the main street, where currently there is an elementary open market (*photos: New development on Aragvi river bank: Municipal market 1, 2*).

- **The House of Justice:** proposals for this building had already been submitted to World Heritage Centre and comments made by the Advisory Bodies requested major amendments: “ICOMOS considers that no attempt has been made to break up the building into smaller volumes nor to avoid large, unified surfaces (either completely or partly made of glass) that will reflect the strong sun in Mtskheta. As a result, the large glass surfaces of the buildings will create unfavourable conditions inside but, more importantly, the large flat (or white) surfaces will intensely reflect sunlight, acting as a mirror when viewed from the surrounding historic hills.”

For this building there was a presentation to the mission at the Ministry of Justice by the design team of architects in the presence of the Deputy Minister of Justice. The Public Service Hall is an agency of the Georgian government which provides a variety of public services; these include the services of the Civil Registry Agency, the National Agency of Public Registry, the National Archives, the National Bureau of Enforcement and the Notary Chamber of Georgia. Services are made available at public service halls throughout the country. Currently, Public Service Hall endeavours to provide over 300 different kinds of services at the main location in Tbilisi.

As it was explained, the objective is “*to find the best balance between protecting the WHS in parallel with providing the best functioning and services in Mtskheta as in the capital city*”. The Ministry of Justice explained the background and how the new Justice House and new Police Station buildings initiative, is linked to the Georgian administrative reform and anti-corruption policy. The programme of the Ministry of Justice includes - during the next 2-3 years – the completion of a series of buildings with similar services throughout the country. This is a new initiative by the Ministry of Justice in order that every citizen, wherever he/she is, may be supplied with all necessary documents. The Ministry of Justice’s ambition and the core factors for the Public Service Hall are: The new buildings to express the modern architecture, to be landmarks for the city and even in complete contrast to the buildings of the past, in order to reflect the “*new spirit of the new government*.” Glass and singular designs are common to all these new buildings, which are meant to symbolize administrative transparency on the one hand and embody administrative renewal and new services on the other hand.

The members of the joint ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring Mission, as well as the representative of the WHC, made it clear that for an historic urban landscape with traditional character such as that of Mtskheta, in the setting of a World Heritage property, new buildings and, even more importantly, public ones should not be

"dominant" but, on the contrary, should be "subject" to the character of the monumental, cultural and natural environment.

To the questions submitted by the mission, the following answers were given:

- There is no other available free public area in Mtskheta for the construction of public buildings.
- The modern system of providing services, as well as the particular type of services, is such that they require a completely modern building. Today the relevant services are provided to Mtskheta by different services in individually standing buildings. However, it was not absolutely clear to the mission since The National Intellectual Property Center of Georgia has already been reconstructed in the very place, why this building cannot satisfy the functions already described above.
- The future development of the city's population will not require any increase of the volume of the building, and indeed the initial volume of the building has been reduced.
- There are time limits for financing the construction of these buildings, and the building should be completed within the next two years. Consequently, under this rationale, the building construction should be start immediately, and before the completion of the new Urban Land-Use Master Plan.

The visit to the site proved that the new location is next to existing massive residential buildings from the Soviet period (1960s of 20<sup>th</sup> century). The construction of the new House of Justice could enhance the degraded area with the massive residential buildings from the Soviet period. The particular place chosen does not disturb the view to Jvari hill. (*Photos: New development on Aragvi river bank: House of Justice new site, House of Justice project*)

The mission welcomes the changes to the building facades, avoiding large glass surfaces that would have made unfavourable conditions inside the building, and have had negative impact on the view from the surrounding historic hills.

In the opinion of the mission, the building project could be further elaborated, in order to avoid a unified volumetric composition.

The mission posed an additional question of principle, however, in undertaking the erection of this building in advance of the adoption of an Urban Land-Use Master Plan, as is discussed below in the **Remarks (5, 6)**.

#### **New construction area on "Pikris Gora" hill** (*General view - D*)

The "Pikris Gora" hill is located on the right embankment of Aragvi River and is a clearly dominant in Mtskheta surroundings. The eastern edge of "Pikris Gora" directly adjoins the Samtavro Valley. The investigated territory is within the area of Samtavro Convent.

The above-mentioned territory of 8 hectares has been privatized in recent years. Nowadays, due to the organic development of the city, the development of this territory by private owners appears to be inevitable. Because of the private nature of the area, it is not possible for the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation to intervene decisively and effectively in this territory. Following the WHC and ICOMOS recommendations, and under the initiative of Mtskheta Municipality, archaeological trial-investigation works performed on "Pikris Gora" hill and on the neighbouring territories of Samtavro Valley. The attached document-report from September 2014 reflects the results and the conclusions of these works. Actually, it was the first archaeological excavation made in this very area and it was supposed to be exemplary in order to demonstrate to the city residents the importance of the findings and their significance in case of loss of the area, due to its eventual reconstruction.

The trial-investigation works were carried out in plots owned in total by 70 private owners. 44 ditches and 26 trenches were dug. Archaeological sites were found only in 14 plots. From the attached map (attached document - photo No.12, in Georgian language) it is not possible to identify the exact points of the findings. They are dated of the late antique period and earlier medieval centuries, and are: stone tombs, ceramics, osteological material found in deep of only 0,10-0,80 meters from the contemporary grown surface. The report includes just a short description of the findings in the ancient burials, without any scientific assessment and evaluation. However ICOMOS has the opinion that the findings are the continuation of the Samtavro necropolis in the adjacent hill (General view – E, compare photo of the fence limits between the two areas: Samtavro valley 8)

The joint ICOMOS/ICCROM mission stressed that ultimately the non-real estate development and the non-construction of new housing at least on the lower section of "Pikris Gora" hill, where ancient burials are found and which falls within the boundaries of the protected archaeological zone, is substantially a matter of preservation of Georgian national heritage. It should be underlined, that, according to the submitted Management Plan, "Pikris Gora" hill is included within the borders of Jvari Monastery visual field (Map 2.19) and within the borders of the Visual protection area (Map 2.23). Therefore it is the State Party, in accordance with the national legislation, which should decide whether to protect this heritage intact, to deliver to future generations, or whether it will be handed over for new building construction on the basis of the argument that *"similar findings exist in the adjoining land, owned by the community "...*

### **General Remarks**

1) It is worth underlining the spatial, historical, environmental, and ultimately, spiritual - relationships that diachronically characterized the positioning of Jvari church on the hill, Svetitskhoveli Cathedral church in the city centre and the *katholikon* of Samtavro monastery near the homonym necropolis. From this point of view, the symbolic meaning and importance of positioning the above key monuments of World Cultural Heritage in Mtskheta, concerning the representation on the earth and in this particular place of an (other) terrestrial Jerusalem, meeting the religious needs of pilgrims of medieval Georgia Christianity should be understood in depth. Indeed, this

ideal Christological scheme followed by specially selected positioning other monuments, in and around the city, such as the Gethsemane (Getsimania) church, the Antioch (Antiokia) church, the Bridge of Magi (Pompey) etc. This aspect has already been developed in detail in the Baseline Study, and it was presented during the meeting with the group of national experts of the *Architectural, Art and Restoration Council of the Patriarchate*, as well (photos: *Mtskheta City: Visual relation between Djvari monastery (1) on the hill, Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (2) and Samtavro Nunnery (3)*).

For medieval Christian societies, both in the East and in the West, the centrality of the New Jerusalem idea was crucial, since the city of Jerusalem was regarded as the “centre of the world, the axis of the universe, the place of Salvation”. The hierotopical approach has made possible more profound insights into this important issue of medieval era. In this respect the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta belong to the circle of medieval Christian centres that have reproduced the image of a terrestrial Jerusalem “in imitation of and as a path to the Heavenly Jerusalem”.

This cultural – semantic significance of the site, along with the historical landscape and the spectacular natural environment should be given serious consideration in the Master Plan that is being studied and these spiritual values be safeguarded within the planned development of the city.

2) Up to now there is no approved Urban Master Plan for the City of Mtskheta. Consequently, the conditions and the character of future city planning, and especially in the sensitive zones – have not yet been clarified. The Master Plan should address the question of land use, and clearly identify development zones, sensitive zones, and non-construction zones. Accordingly, the Master Plan should be based on large-scale heritage assessments, the identification of view corridors and the definition of a unified buffer zone for the property. It could also identify unsuitable buildings. The Master Plan should include detailed planning zones and should also include height and density regulations in order to provide clarity on how other new buildings will avoid sensitive areas, and where new building construction, necessary for the development of the city, can be undertaken and under which prerequisites it can be realized.

The construction of the above mentioned public buildings is actually the first new development in Mtskheta historic town, just outside the historic centre and especially along the Aragvi river bank. On this matter it is worth noting that, as stated by the national experts in the meeting with the *Architectural, Art and Restoration Council of the Patriarchate* - even in Soviet times nobody had dared to “touch” this specific and “sensitive” riverine area.

3) The placement of the public buildings along the street and the promenade created on the eastern limit of the historic core of the city, blocks substantially the visual contact with Jvari hill, while, to the contrary, it could provide public access to an area with natural environment and take advantage in the best way of viewing the river and the historic hill.



4) The provision of public utility buildings, which serve not only the historic settlement of Mtskheta, its surroundings, but also the modern city, a short distance away, and "satellite towns" around it, creates an operational load, for an area that should be a recreational cultural landscape, a crucial part of setting of the property. As the mission was informed, the daily function of these public buildings has already led to increasing traffic load in this area, directed from the adjacent highway.

5) The modern development of the historic town of Mtskheta should be considered through a vision of the city as a unified system including the old town, the modern city and the satellite communities (especially after the recent administrative reform – see below: *Meeting with the Local Authorities*). It should be stressed that the general problem relating to the location of basic city functions, is directly connected with the absence of an Integrated Land Use Master Plan. As outlined at the meeting with the *Architectural, Art and Restoration Council of the Patriarchate*, in an earlier study by their national experts the development of the city's future administrative centre was planned further north in the Bebristsikhe hill area, which is located outside the historic centre, closer to the developing new city of Mtskheta, and thus could have a more functioning connection with the highway (see: *General view – B*). If, therefore, the Urban Land-use Master Plan had been completed in time and a multi-central city development had been planned for the city of Mtskheta, with de-centralized new functions and without burdening the historic centre, the current situation would have been avoided.

6) The mission is of the opinion that the recent request for the construction of the New House of Justice building should be considered in this context. At the meeting in the Ministry of Justice the joint ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring Mission, along with the WHC representative explained that the construction of this additional public building, together with those already implemented, essentially are creating in situ de-facto a greater zone of social public buildings. These buildings, on the one hand may correspond to objective functional needs of the (new) city of Mtskheta but, on the other hand, in practice they implement and realize a very important part of the Master Plan of the historic city of Mtskheta, in the absence of a Master Plan, and, in particular, precisely in an area where it has been repeatedly stressed by WHC Committee that there should be no construction. A further negative factor is that private plots in this area have already been given permission by the municipal authorities to build a complex of private residences (*Map 2*).

7) The mission is of the opinion that an immediate stop to any kind of construction in this particular area could instead be used to accelerate the completion and implementation of the Urban Land-Use Master Plan by the Local Authorities.

8) Regarding "Pikris Gora" hill development the mission agrees with the following observations (with reference to the report sent by Mtskheta Municipality Board to the WHC on 12/04/2013):

The development within the area which is not registered as archaeological protected zone should not destroy the landscape value of "Pikris Gora" hill and the adjacent area to be studied, which is absolutely possible by in situ investigation, reasonable

terrace planning and regulation of scale for structures. Even though this hill is registered as “design area”, any land works should be carried out under archaeological supervision, which implies methodical registration and rescue of any artefacts noticed. In case of discovery of an object bearing signs of an immovable monument, a special archaeological team with powers given by the archaeological commission should be involved.

Development of the area under study on the “Pikris Gora” hill should be carried out in accordance with the protective zones of Mtskheta historic town.

As land parcels are located in the development regulation zone, they are bordering the archaeological protection zone (within which privately owned land parcels are also located), and they are clearly outlined against the background of Samtavro Monastery Complex from the remote view. The following parameters should be observed when developing the Development Regulation Plan:

1. The height of the residential house should not exceed three floors. Lower floors should be designed according to the relief inclination.
2. The roofing of the house should be inclined, covered with tiles.
3. The wall of the fence enclosing the house should be built with natural stone and wood whose analogue is frequent in the protection zone of historic development of the city.

At the same time, it is necessary to leave the highest point of “Pikris Gora” hill undeveloped within 20 m. radius, in order not to destroy its importance for Mtskheta landscape, its visual perception from Jvari monastery and hill, and also to avoid potential risk of destroying possible traces of the hellenistic antiquity cultural heritage.

### **3.2. Training programme**

- **Regional level**

The development of a regional cooperation mission and training factor is a positive thought being under development. The many common problems relating to the monuments of the wider geographic area (including Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), which are referred to a great extent to a common cultural framework, provide a solid foundation for regional cooperation and awareness education and skills of the new generation to avoid the current problems on monument preservation.

- **National level**

Capacity building is one of the main priorities for the NACHPG. The Agency is considering setting up a specific training centre and has engaged discussions with ICCROM. The NACHPG wishes to assess the major conservation-restoration and rehabilitation projects carried out in recent years and develop an action plan to meet capacity building needs defined by the assessment undertaken by the Ministry of Culture and the Agency in the general reform process. At the request of the NACHPG, ICCROM has provided a list of experts in different fields of cultural heritage. The Agency wishes to finalize the concept of such a training centre. This is a long-term policy which should be supported and encouraged as it promotes long term capacity building mechanisms.

- **Local level**

The training of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation and Municipal staff and strengthening of inter-ministry cooperation provided through the preparation of the terms of references, within the development and the implementation process of the Urban Master Plan and its monitoring, should be among the main future goals of the training programme.

Regarding the short-term policy, currently, a suitable place to house the Great Mtskheta Museum Reserve is sought locally, as the historical building is already privatized and practically the Museum remains without headquarters. Therefore, a serious problem has emerged, concerning the housing of the exhibits, the Museum's services, as well as to ensure and develop on local level conservation and management of the property, including a monitoring mechanism for the physical conservation of the buildings and archaeological sites.

### **3.3. Main results of the consultation meetings**

- **Meeting with the Local Authorities** (11/11/2014) (*photo: Meeting with Local Authorities*)

1) After the recent municipal elections in October 2014, the city of Mtskheta has become one administration unit, a self-government municipality, including:

- a) the Town of Mtskheta, ahead with the Mayor and the City Council, and
- b) the Mtskheta Municipality, ahead with the Governor of the Municipal City of Mtskheta

2) The joint ICOMOS/ICCROM mission pointed out that all interventions on the Aragvi river bank of the scale proposed would have an immediate impact on the World Heritage property and should have been notified to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies under paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines..

3) The new local government expressed the willingness to do everything possible to eliminate the irregularities of the past (especially the erection of new public buildings).

- The Municipality will try to develop a document with its long-term "Vision of the Municipality" on the city's monuments within the frames of the new Urban Master Plan. This will incorporate the religious aspects of the monuments – a factor that will add essential content to the document. "Vision and Strategy" on the monuments should coincide with those of the Church, to have greater potency and effectiveness.

- It is planned from now on that new building projects within the buffer zones of the property should be approved serially by: the Municipality, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, the Technical Office of the Patriarchate. - The Municipality will try to fund the tender to continue the compilation of the Urban Master Plan.

- **Meeting with Architectural, Art and Restoration Council of the Patriarchate** (12/11/2014) (*photo: Meeting in the Patriarchate*)

The *Architectural, Art and Restoration Council of the Patriarchate* includes prominent scientists (planners, architects, conservators, art historians, etc.) with Deputy Chairman Bishop (architect) David Alaverdeli. Head of urban issues is Prof. Dr. George Shaishmelashvili who was one of the key members of the 2003 *Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan*, elaborated by UNESCO and UNDP. The meeting with the Council gave plenty of useful up to date information on the development and new building activity in and around the historic core of Mtskheta. The Council expressed its total opposition to new constructions in the city's historic area and on the river bank and adjacent to the religious monuments - components of the World Heritage property, as well as its own view regarding the new functions of the city within the future Urban Master Plan. On this aspect it is encouraging that the scientific team of the Patriarchate is in full collaboration with the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Boundary issues**

The existing boundaries are too close to the monuments. Particularly around the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Church, the area is limited to one side of the road that surrounds the monument leaving out the essential part of the town image – just on the other side of the road. A general heritage assessment is under discussion in order to provide general guidance in the Management Plan, within which the boundaries of the property components might be extended and managed within a unified buffer zone designated as a cultural landscape around the monuments. The joint ICOMOS/ICCROM mission reiterates the Committee's decision that the State Party should submit a minor boundary modification proposal for a unified buffer zone of the property to enhance the protection of the property and to allow a clear understanding of the archaeological and visually sensitive areas around the property. The mission also would support the submission of a minor boundary modification to enlarge slightly the boundaries of individual components.

### **4.2 Development of a sufficient and effective land-use planning mechanisms**

The development of a sufficient and effective mechanisms to ensure that new constructions within the buffer zones and in the historic environment of the city, maintain the authenticity of the property and its setting through avoiding interventions with high volumes, inappropriate forms and incompatible materials, has not been fully achieved up to date by the Local government, nor by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

The implementation of the urban Master Plan should meet high level quality standards for the conservation, management and development of a World Heritage Site and its surrounding urban and landscape setting.

### 4.3 Outstanding Universal Value and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments

The city development problems have had an adverse impact on integrity of the property. The joint ICOMOS/ICCROM mission noted that although the new interventions have had an immediate impact on the property, they have not been notified in advance to the World Heritage Centre, in line with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

The approved Statement of Outstanding Universal Value sets out clearly the way the monuments form important landmarks within the cultural landscape of the Mtskheta river valley, as well as the need for the visual qualities of the setting to be maintained.

The mission reiterated the Committee's decision requesting the State Party to declare a moratorium on any new construction of any kind (including the project for the New House of Justice) and to stop all developments before the legal approval of an Urban Land-Use Master Plan of the Mtskheta City. It is recommended that the State Party take corrective measures regarding the new public building constructions on the landscape in the riverine zone of Aragvi river, through:

- stopping immediately any new construction activity;
- proceeding with a re-design of the riverine zone as cultural-natural landscape recreation area, including widespread planting of high trees around the erected new buildings.

The mission recommends that any development projects (including a project for the recreation area along the Aragvi river bank) should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, for review by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, before any commitment has been made.

However, it should be acknowledge that the above proposed measures (or others that could be thought about) cannot change radically the already created situation, which has started to have an adverse impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **for the joint ICOMOS / ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta Georgia**

**10 – 15 November 2014**

At its 38th session (Decision 38 COM 7A.17, Doha, 2014) the Committee urged the State Party to finalise its work on all the corrective measures (Annex I) adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010) by the end of 2014. The Committee also requested the State Party to invite a joint ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to the property to assess the progress achieved in implementing all corrective measures in order to reach the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

In line with this decision, the objective of the monitoring mission is to review the state of conservation of the property as well as the progress achieved in implementing all corrective measures.

In addition, as the mission will be carried out in parallel to a joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre/World Bank mission to the property aiming to define the priorities for development of a project on Sustainable Development of the World Heritage City of Mtskheta within the framework of the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape recommendations (HUL), advice will be offered by the Reactive Monitoring mission on a proposal for a joint UNESCO/Georgian government/World Bank project with regard to improving the protection and management of the World Heritage property Historical Monuments of Mtskheta in view of its future removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

In relation to Operational Guidelines paragraphs 190-199 (review of the state of conservation of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger) and paragraphs 192-198 (procedure for the eventual deletion of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger), the mission should review and assess the following key issues:

- 1) Review the overall situation of the property, including the status of new developments, as well as any intention to undertake or to authorize new construction projects in the vicinity of the World Heritage property which could affect its Outstanding Universal Value and the use of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments;
- 2) Review the status of approval of the landscape protection area, essential to ensure the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its

setting, as well as of the development of the guidelines for the protection and development of Historical Monuments of Mtskheta and its historical landscape;

- 3) Evaluate the progress with the implementation of corrective measures adopted at its 34th session (Decision **34 COM 7A.27**, Brasilia, 2010), as well as the Committees' Decisions adopted at its 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th sessions (Annex II) as follows:
  - a) Review the boundary issue, including a minor boundary modification proposal for a unified buffer zone of the property, to be submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2015** for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in 2015;
  - b) Review the status of a **5-year training programme** for the conservation and management of the property, including a monitoring mechanism for the physical conservation of the buildings and archaeological sites, as well as the long-term conservation and consolidation measures within the World Heritage property;
  - c) Review the status of development and implementation of a **management system**, including:
    - a progress with the adoption of legislation that assures the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the whole of the World Heritage property and its component parts,
    - a progress with the development of an Integrated Management Plan for the World Heritage property and its buffer zone, taking into account ICOMOS comments and recommendations (June 2013) on a draft Management Plan submitted by the authorities;
    - a progress with the establishment of a clear institutional coordination mechanism ensuring that the conservation of the property receives priority consideration within relevant governmental decision-making processes,
    - a progress with the development of a State Programme for the protection of World Heritage religious properties in Georgia, as a legal framework for co-management under which the respective responsibilities of the State Party and the Georgian Patriarchate are effectively established, monitored and evaluated in relation to the protection and conservation of the property,
  - d) Review the status of development of strategies to enhance awareness of World Heritage among stakeholders and developers;
- 4) Evaluate the implementation of the decision of the World Heritage Committee urging the State Party in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop integrated multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation of the monument complexes of the property;
- 5) Prepare a detailed report for review by the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee including, in conformity with the *Operational Guidelines*:
  - a) an indication of threats or significant improvement in the conservation of the property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee;

- b) any follow-up to previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee to the state of conservation of the property; and
- c) information on any threat or damage to or loss of Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity for which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List,

and submit the joint report to the World Heritage Centre in electronic form (according to the standard format).



National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia

Joint ICOMOS and ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to  
the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta WHS

Tbilisi- Mtskheta, Georgia, 10-15 November, 2014

And

The Joint World Heritage Centre and World Bank mission to the Historical  
Monuments of Mtskheta WHS

Tbilisi, Georgia, 11-16 November 2014

**Draft combined Programme**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Participants</b>
10.11.2014	-	Arrival to Tbilisi, accommodation in the Hotel	-	Mr Alkiviades Prepis, ICOMOS Mr Joseph King, ICCROM
11.11.2014	10:00 12:00	Meeting with the NACHPG administration, the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection and General Secretary of Georgian National Commission for UNESCO	NACHPG Head office 27, Atoneli str., Tbilisi, Georgia	Mr Nikoloz Antidze, <i>General Director</i> ; Mrs Rusudan Mirzikashvili, <i>Head of the International Relations Unit, National Focal Point</i> ; Mr Levan Kharatishvili, Deputy Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection Mrs. Ketevan Kandelaki, <i>General Secretary of the National Commission for UNESCO</i>
	12:30 14:00	Lunch		
	14:00 18:00	Visit to Mtskheta: Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Samtavro nunnery	Mtskheta	ICOMOS/ICCROM RMM, The NACHPG representatives, Superior of Samtavro, Local population

	18:00 19:00	Meeting the local and regional authorities	Mtskheta Governor's office. Mtskheta	Mr Dimitri Khundadze, <i>Majoritarian MP;</i> Mr Nugzar Kipiani, <i>Governor;</i> Mr Guram Ansiani <i>Chairman of the Local Council;</i> Mr Zurab Abesadze <i>Head of the Executive Body of the Municipality;</i> Mr Nikoloz Antidze; Mrs. Rusudan Mirzikashvili; Mr Nukri Maisurashvili NACHPG
	20.00	Official Dinner		Hosted by the NACHPG
	--	Arrival of WHC/WB mission	--	Marie Noel Tournoux, WHC
12.11.2014	10:00 13:00	Visit to Mtskheta: Jvari Monastery and other sites	Mtskheta	ICOMOS/ICCROM RMM, the NACHPG representatives, Superior of Jvari Monastery
	13.00 14.00	Lunch		
	15:00 17:00	Meeting with the representatives of the Patriarchate of Georgia	Patriarchate of Georgia	Bishop David Alaverdeli, <i>Deputy Chairman of the Architectural, Art and Restoration Council of the Patriarchate,</i> The NACHPG representatives, Representatives of the Architectural, Art and Restoration Council, ICOMOS/ICCROM RMM
	19:00	Dinner	-	
13.11.2014	10:00 13:00	Meeting with state stakeholders	NACHPG Head office	The NACHPG, World Bank, WHC, ICCROM, ICOMOS, MDF, MoESD, MoFA, MRDI, MoJ, APA, GNTA, other stakeholders
	13.00 14.00	Lunch		
	14.00 18.00	Working meetings	Tbilisi	The NACHPG administration Other stakeholders
14. 11.2014	10: 30 13:00	Presentations on different activities of the Agency Working on the Regional Capacity Building programme	NACHPG Head office	The NACHPG administration ICOMOS/ICCROM RMM, Other experts

	13:00 14:00	Lunch		
	14:00 18:00	Working meeting to discuss the main priorities (including a capacity-building component)	NACHPG Head office	The NACHPG administration ICOMOS/ICCROM RMM, Other experts
	18:00	Official dinner	Tbilisi	Hosted by NACHPG
15.11.2014	-	Departure of RMM experts	-	Joseph King, ICCROM Alkiviades Prepis, ICOMOS
	11.00 13.00	Individual work		Marie-Noel Tournoux, WHC
	13.00 14.00	Lunch		
	14.00 17.00	Working meeting, Finalization of the deliverables	NACHPG Head office	The NACHPG administration Mr Ahmed Eiweida, the World Bank Marie-Noel Tournoux, WHC
16.11.2014	-	Departure of WHC representative	-	Marie-Noel Tournoux, WHC

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**Established by National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia**

**Day 1                      Meeting at the NACHPG**

Mr Nikoloz Antidze, DG

Ms Rusudan Mirzikashvili, Head of UNESCO and International Relations Unit

Ms Tea Oniani, Head of the Legal Unit

Ms Irine Sabashvili, Head of the Permits Unit

Mr Gia Sosanidze, Head of the Monuments Rehabilitation Planning Unit

Mr Alkiviades Prepis, ICOMOS

Mr Joe King, ICCROM

**Day 1                      Meeting at the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection**

Mr Mikheil Giorgadze, the Minister

Mr Levan Kharatishvili, the Deputy Minister

Mr Nikoloz Antidze, DG of the NACHPG

Mr Alkiviades Prepis, ICOMOS

Mr Joe King, ICCROM

Ms Rusudan Mirzikashvili, the NACHPG

**Day 1                      Meeting with local and regional authorities**

Mr Koba Arabuli, Deputy governor of the Mtskheta Mtianeti region

Mr Avto Nemsitsveridze, the Mayor of Mtskheta

Mr Ilo Jishkariani, the Chair of the City Council of Mtskheta

Mr Guram Ansiani, the Head of the council of the Municipality of Mtskheta

Mr Zurab Abesadze, the Governor of the Municipality of Mtskheta  
Ms Tamar Kuprashvili, the representative of the Bureau of the Majoritarian  
of Mtskheta  
Ms. Tamar Kvantaliani, the representative of the Patriarchate  
Mr Nikoloz Antidze, the DG of the NACHPG  
Ms. Rusudan Mirzikashvili, the NACHPG

**Day 2                      Church community of Mtskheta**

Father Ilia, Svetitskhoveli  
Father Theodore, Samtavro

**Day 2                      Meeting at the Patriarchate of Mtskheta**

Metropolitan David of Alaverdi, Deputy Chair of the Art and Restoration Council  
of the Patriarchate  
Archbishop Gerasime, Head of International Relations  
Metropolitan Theodore  
experts of the Arts and Architecture Council of the Patriarchate  
Father Besarion, architect  
Ms Qetevan Abashidze, Art Historian  
Mr Nikoloz Dadiani, Historian  
Mr Merab Buchukuri, Conservator  
Ms Tamar Kvantaliani, Secretary of the Council  
Mr Gia Shaishmelashvili, Urban Planner  
Mr Givi Shavdia, Urban Planner  
Mr Merab Bolqvadze, Urban Planner  
Mr David Abuladze, Chair of the Union of Architects  
  
Ms Rusudan Mirzikashvili, the NaCHPG  
ICOMOS, ICCROM, WHC

## **Day 3**

### **Meeting with the Stakeholders**

Mr Nikoloz Antidze, the DG of the NaCHPG

Mr Levan Kharatishvili, Deputy Minister of culture and Monuments Protection

Mr Giorgi Amashukeli, First Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development

Mr Ilia Darchiashvili, Deputy Head of the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia

Mr David Gigineishvili, Head of the Construction and Urban Planning Department of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development

Mr Kakha Potskishvili, Deputy Head of the Construction and Urban Planning Department of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development

Ms Ketevan Kandelaki, Secretary General of the UNESCO National Commission

Mr Mikheil Sarjveladze, Deputy Minister of Justice

Ms Nino Inckirveli, Deputy Head of the Public Service Agency

Mr Ahmed Eiweida, the World Bank Office in South Caucasus, the Sector Leader for Sustainable Development

Mr Tina Lebanidze, Assistant to the World Bank

ICOMOS, ICCROM, WHC

Mrs Rusudan Mirzikashvili, the Head of the UNESCO and International Relations Unit

Mr Giorgi Cheishvili, the Head of the Education Unit of the NACHPG

Ms Irma Dolidze, the Head of the Museum-Reserves and Museum Collections Unit of the NACHPG

Ms Tea Oniani, the Head of the Legal Unit of the NACHPG

Representatives of the Patriarchate:

Ms Qetevan Abashidze, Art Historian

Mr Nikoloz Dadiani, Historian

Ms Tamar Kvantaliani, Secretary of the Council

Mr Gia Shaishmelashvili, Urban Planner

Mr Givi Shavdia, Urban Planner

Mr Merab Bolqvadze, Urban Planner  
Mr David Abuladze, Chair of the Union of Architects  
other representatives from Architects union  
  
ICOMOS Georgia (apologised for absence)

### **Day 3**

#### **Meeting at the Justice House, site visit**

Mr Gotcha Lortkipanidze, the Deputy Minister of Justice  
Mr Mikheil Sarjveladze, the Deputy Minister of Justice  
Ms Nino Intskirveli, the Deputy Head of the Public Service Agency  
Mr Irakli Lomidze, the Director of the Justice House  
Mr Vasil Janjgava, the Head of the Economic Department of the Ministry of Justice  
Mr Papuna Papiashvili, the Head of the Brand Development and Sales Stimulation Unit of the State Execution Bureau  
Ms Nino Sukhishvili, the Head of the Quality Management Unit of the Justice House  
Mr Irakli Sharashidze, Architect of the Mtskheta Justice House  
Mr Nikoloz Antidze, the DG of the NACHPG  
Ms Rusudan Mirzkkashvili, the Head of UNESCO and International Relations Unit  
ICOMOS, ICCOM, WHC

### **Day 4**

#### **Meeting with the TWINNING program representatives**

Mr Nikoloz Antidze, the DG of the NACHPG  
Mr Alessandro Bianchi, the Resident Twinning Advisor  
Ms Ana Sanikidze, Assistant to the RTA  
Mr Vano Vashaymadze, the RTA Counterpart, Adviser to the DG of the NACHPG  
Ms Rusudan Mirzikashvili, the Head of the UNESCO and International Relations Unit  
ICOMOS, WHC, ICCROM

**Day 4****Business Lunch**

Mr Nikoloz Antidze, the DG of the NACHPG

Mr Levan Kharatishvili, the Deputy Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection

Mr David Lejava, Deputy Minister of Finances

Mr Ilia Darchiashvili, the Deputy Head of the Municipal Development Fund

Mr Ahmed Eiweida, the World Bank

Ms Ketevan Kandelaki, the Secretary General of the UNESCO National  
Commission

Ms Rusudan Mirzikashvili, the Head of the UNESCO and International  
Relations Unit



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE MISSION / THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

### *Inscription history*

The outstanding universal value of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta is defined by the following:

#### *Justification provided by the State Party :*

City-museum, architectural reserve, Mtskheta is a multi-layered monument, testifying to the great scope of building activity and high culture of the country. Preserved architectural monuments and unearthed archaeological material testify to the high artistic value of building and minor arts in various epochs, beginning from the 2nd mill. B.C. to today.

The architectural monuments of Mtskheta, being stagemaking in the development of Georgian architecture are at the same time extremely significant for the study of the medieval architecture of the whole Christendom. Besides they are striking examples of the unity of architecture with the surrounding landscape.

Of special value from the artistic and historical points of view are the monuments of monumental painting (mosaic floor in "Dionysius Maison" in Szalisa, 2nd c. A.D.) and metalwork (goldsmithery) discovered in Mtskheta. Special place in semitic epigraphics is occupied by Armagi inscriptions, giving vast valuable data for the study of the written language in general and making it possible to deal with the origin of Georgian written language anew.

### *ADVISORY BODY STATEMENT:*

The nomination dossier submitted by the Republic of Georgia was accompanied by a number of books and other documents. Most of these are written in Russian or Georgian, neither of which is a working language of the World Heritage Convention. The most useful book, *Georgian: Wehrbauten und Kirchen*, is in German, another non-working language. More importantly, the only map provided showing the "Protective Zones of Mtskheta", was a very small-scale photographic print of a much larger map; the barely decipherable legends were, in any case, all in Georgian. However, new maps showing the areas proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List, together with buffer zones, were supplied to the mission, together with a summary of the Georgian protection legislation, as required by the *Operational Guidelines*.

Recommendation: That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iii and iv.

### ***Inscription criteria and World Heritage values***

The nominated property of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta correspond to criteria (iii), (iv).

**Criterion iii:** The group of churches at Mtskheta bear testimony to the high level and art and culture of the vanished Kingdom of Georgia, which played an outstanding role in the medieval history of its region.

**Criterion iv:** The historic churches of Mtskheta are outstanding examples of medieval ecclesiastical architecture in the Caucasus region.

Bureau (July 1994): The Bureau recommended the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List and suggested to the State Party to change the name to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta".

***Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau (refer to previous State of Conservation reports etc.)***

## **THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA**

<b><i>35th session of the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO, 2011</i></b>
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**Extract of the Decisions adopted the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011)**

**Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) (C 708)**

**Decision: 35 COM 7A.30**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-11/35.COM/7A,
2. Recalling Decision **34 COM 7B.27** adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010),
3. Notes the efforts made by the State Party in the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's decisions with regard to the corrective measures aimed at future removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
4. Urges the State Party to submit proposals for a buffer zone as a minor boundary modification, as well as to develop and finalize the Urban Land-Use Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta;
5. Also urges the State Party to adopt legislation that ensures adequate protection of the property and of any defined buffer zone and wider setting so as to sustain its Outstanding Universal Value;
6. Encourages the State Party to continue developing strategies to enhance awareness of World Heritage among stakeholders and developers;
7. Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to the property to assess the progress in the implementation of the corrective measures;
8. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2012**, a detailed state of conservation report, including a progress report on the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012;

9. **Decides** to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

**34th session of the World Heritage Committee, Brasilia, 2010**

**Extract of the Decisions adopted the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session (Brasília, 2010)**

**Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) (C 708)**

**Decision: 34 COM 7A.27**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-10/34.COM/7A.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **33 COM 7B.102**, adopted at its 33rd session (Seville, 2009),
3. Notes the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Commission to ensure co-ordination of all World Heritage matters;
4. Also notes the recommendations of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to the property in March 2010;
5. Reiterates its serious concern about the state of conservation of the different components of the property, and the slow rate of progress made by the State Party in addressing urgent issues;
6. Adopts the following Desired State of Conservation for the property, for its future removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger:
  - a) The World Heritage property with clearly marked boundaries and buffer zone precisely identified,
  - b) The Urban Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta, including land-use regulations and conservation master plan approved,
  - c) A comprehensive management system, including an Integrated Management Plan of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone, approved,
  - d) Long-term consolidation and conservation of the historical monuments in Mtskheta ensured;
7. Adopts the following corrective measures and the timeframe for their implementation:
  - a) Changes to be effected within one year - Precise identification of the World Heritage property and clearly marked boundaries and buffer zones by the following actions:
    - Prepare adequate maps showing clear limits of all components of the property,
    - Undertake topographic and archaeological surface surveys including the archaeological remains, important historical monuments and landscapes,
    - Define the boundaries of the World Heritage property according to the results of the relevant surveys,
    - Develop a 5-year training programme for the conservation and management of the site, possibly with participation at sub-regional/regional level,
    - Develop a monitoring mechanism for the physical conservation of the buildings and archaeological sites,
    - Define and prioritize the long-term conservation and consolidation measures within the World Heritage property;

- b) Changes to be effected within one/two years –  
Implementation of the Urban Land-Use Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta, including operating plans and conservation master plan by the following actions:
- Establish complete cadastral information (land ownership), in publicly available and easily accessible format, for all land within the World Heritage property and its buffer zone,
  - Establish clear operating plans and strict limits to development rights and management regulations within the property and its buffer zone, to ensure the long-term protection and conservation of the World Heritage property,
  - Ensure that development rights on existing private or leased lands within the property are clearly defined and strictly controlled,
  - Adopt and implement the Urban Land-Use Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta, including all aspects of infrastructure rehabilitation, zoning regulations with particular emphasis on the establishment of no-construction zones, the institutional reform and capacity building, community relations, and tourism development,
  - Make publicly available the information on land-use for all lands within the property and its buffer zone, in easily accessible format, to ensure transparency in land use and allocations;
- c) Changes to be effected within two/three years - Ensured site management by the following actions:
- Adopt legislation that assures the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the whole of the World Heritage property and its component parts,
  - Adopt the necessary priority for the conservation of the property in national policy, planning and budgets, and take pro-active measures to solicit donor support for property management and conservation,
  - Develop and implement an Integrated Management Plan for the World Heritage property and its buffer zone, including:
    - a tourism strategy,
    - strategic guidelines for the integrated multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings,
    - design guidelines for new constructions and the street furniture,
    - clear guidelines for the type of management, religious or visitor infrastructure that can be built within the World Heritage property,
  - Develop and implement a management system,
  - Undertake appropriate training in conservation and management for the staff in charge of the preservation of the property,
  - Establish a clear institutional coordination mechanism ensuring that the conservation of the property receives priority consideration within relevant governmental decision-making processes,
  - Develop a state programme for the protection of World Heritage religious properties in Georgia, as a legal framework for co-management under which the respective responsibilities of the State Party and the Georgian Patriarchate are effectively established, monitored and evaluated in relation to the protection and conservation of the property,
- d) Changes to be effected within five years (after possible removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2 - 3 years) - Long-term protection

and conservation of the historical monuments and the archaeological remains in Mtskheta by the following actions:

- Complete the documentation and recording of all historical monuments and archaeological remains in a digitized information database for management, conservation and planning purposes,
  - Establish a full inventory of paintings including digitalization and reference system for all historical monuments in Mtskheta,
  - Implement restoration of the paintings,
  - Develop a special programme on the protection of all archaeological components of the City of Mtskheta;
8. ***Urges** the State Party to develop, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a draft retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011;*
  9. ***Requests** the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2011, a detailed state of conservation report, including a progress report relevant to the implementation of the corrective measures, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011;*
  10. ***Decides to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

<b>33rd session of the World Heritage Committee, Seville, Spain / 22-30 June 2009</b>
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The World Heritage Committee, at its 32nd session (Quebec City, July 2008), expressed its serious concern about the privatization processes of land situated in the vicinity of the property, and urged the State Party to immediately halt these before the boundary clarification and the preparation of a "Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" are completed. The World Heritage Committee reiterated its request to give highest priority to development of an integrated management plan for the property, and invited the State Party to establish a Special State Commission on World Heritage. Expressing its serious concern about the state of conservation of the archaeological components of the property, the World Heritage Committee urged the State Party to develop a special programme on protection of all archaeological components and indicated that, in the absence of substantial progress, it would consider the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The State Party state of conservation report was received on 29 January 2009 and covered: a) *Conservation The main Church, the northern small Church, parekklession and southern building of the Jvari Monastery*: Damaging impact of aggressive natural conditions on stones is still a problem during 2008. Parts of the bas-reliefs have completely disappeared. Construction issues are still the same: the damaged cupola pillars, threshold stress and cracks in the carrier structures. Some building stones around the eastern arches and around the foundation of the main church are damaged - mould, sooty walls, and cracked building stones are reported. The tiles of cupola's roofing needs immediate renovation. The small Church remains without roofing. The report underlines that the small Church has partially lost its authenticity due to the use of inappropriate materials during the "restoration" works. The conservation project for the small Jvari Church has been prepared. These existing damages are only planned to be addressed in 2009. The joint ICCROM project on conservation of the Saint Cross Monastery is still under implementation. In 2008, the Small Jvari Church Site

Development Plan was completed and works were started to develop a conservation plan. *Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, the Bell Tower, Catholicos-Patriarch Melchisedec Palace, Catholicos-Patriarch Antony Palace, The Defence Wall*: The report noted that parts of the Cathedral walls are disintegrating and in a wrecking state, some building stones of the northern façade are partially demolished, the tiles of roof are partially cracked, the increased humidity damaged the frescoes. The state of conservation of wall paintings should be studied. The XVIIIth century Bell Tower was demolished; the gates of Catholicos- Patriarch Melchisedec Palace urgently need rehabilitation works. The State Party is monitoring Svetitskhoveli Cathedral to assess its structural state and develop a detailed plan to ensure conservation of the frescos. The report states that the Palace of Catholicos - Patriarch Anton II in the South-Eastern part of a courtyard, reconstructed between 2001 – 2004 has partially lost its authenticity.

*Samtavro Nunnery*: The report informed that the problem of roofing of the Cathedral still remains unresolved. The original tiled roofing should be restored. In the Cathedral, archaeological research has not been completed. The northern and southern annexes of the Cathedral need archaeological research, as well as the territory inside the defence wall. The Bell tower significantly bended to the Cathedral needs comprehensive research and conservation works should be implemented on the remains of the King Mirian Palace. In 2008, the restoration works were concluded, which aimed at restoring the bearing wall adjacent to the Tower of Gabriel the Monk and damaged by natural conditions. As the project design had stipulated, a cobble-stone wall with regular sandstone quartz was constructed in front of the concrete wall. In order to prevent accumulation of water in the rear of the wall, drainage of plastic pipe work was arranged in the wall. In order to prepare for conservation of the Samtavro St. Nino Church existing damages were studied and assessed, which led to a plan to construct a new roof to the church. *Armaztsikhe-Bagineti, The roman-type bathes, the "Column Hall", Fortification system*: The report also noted that the six-Apse Church has lost its authenticity due to the reconstruction works conducted with unacceptable methods. The roman-type bathes and the "Column Hall" need conservation. There is a risk of destruction of the building due to the aggressive influence of climatic conditions. Conservation works on the Fortification system should include different construction periods and layers and a conservation and rehabilitation plan should be developed. In September 2008 a competition was announced, aiming at drafting a development concept of Armaztsikhe-Bagineti. Its results are to be announced in spring 2009. Recommendations have been prepared on issues comprising site development, monument conservation and planning of tourist infrastructure. *b) Boundaries* Concerning the boundary issues, the State Party underlined that the Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage has defined a special protection area for all components of the property of a 1 km radius and that the protection zones such as Construction Regulation Zone, Archaeological Heritage Zone, Landscape Protection Zone are currently being adjusted and expanded based on the requirements. The protection zones also regulate new constructions. As a result, there were no in-compliant buildings constructed during 2008. In 2008, the development plan process aiming at restoring the geographic and historical connection between the Jvari Church and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral started, including the rehabilitation of historic routes. *c) Inventories* The State Party also mentioned that the Ministry of Culture, established a regular monitoring exercise for all World Heritage properties, as well as recorded a

full inventory of archaeological and architectural monuments in Mtskheta. The creation of the data base of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta was initiated by the National Agency. Monitoring missions are regularly visiting all properties and are producing summary state of conservation report every year. *d) Management* The State Party created in 2008 an *ad-hoc* “Committee of World Cultural Heritage” established under the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation to be in charge to define functions and liabilities of state agencies, regulate national, local and religious rights in order to ensure a protection and management of the World Heritage properties. This *ad-hoc* Committee shall deal with issues existing in the usage of monuments between private owners, the state and the Patriarchate as well as with privatization-related problems. The Mtskheta Museum-Reserve was reorganized and transformed into the Greater Mtskheta State Archaeological Museum-Reserve and affiliated, in 2008, with the aforementioned National Agency. The State Party informed that the *Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan* developed in collaboration with UNESCO and UNDP is under examination for formal approval by the Ministry of Culture. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the state of conservation of this property and that some monuments may no longer be authentic. The report provides very limited information concerning the preparation of a legal and technical basis to address the threats. The State Party did not provided any detailed responses to the World Heritage Committee’s key requests such as the land privatization issues, development of an integrated management plan for the property, establishment of a Special State Commission on World Heritage issues, development of a special programme on protection of all archaeological components, monitoring of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. No document clarifying the exact boundaries of protected areas of the property and its buffer zones, or any boundary modification proposal, has been provided by the State Party. The State Party did not provide any comments concerning the eventual inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS consider that the State Party has been unable to take into account the World Heritage Committee’s decisions or to carry out the necessary preparatory activities to address existing and any new potential threats. Considering Paragraphs 177 – 179 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS note the absence of substantial progress, which could lead to the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. They furthermore consider that the progress, if exist, cannot be evaluated on the basis of the report submitted by the State Party, and therefore suggest a reactive monitoring mission to the property.

### ***Decision 33COM 7B.102***

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision **32 COM 7B.90**, adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),
3. Expresses its serious concern about the state of conservation of the different components of the property;
4. Regrets that the State Party report did not adequately address the preparation of legal and technical provisions to address the various threats, the aspect of land privatization, the development of an integrated management plan and the

development of a special programme on the protection of all archaeological components;

5. Further regrets that the State Party did not submit documents clarifying the exact boundaries of the protected area of the property and its buffer zone;

6. Notes with regrets that some components have lost their authenticity due to restoration works conducted with unacceptable methods;

7. **Decides to inscribe the Historic Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of the World Heritage in Danger;**

8. Urges the State Party to develop, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value a proposed desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of the World Heritage in Danger, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010;

9. Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS mission to the property in early 2010 to assess the state of conservation of the property;

10. Also requests to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2010**, a report on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendation contained in Decision **32 COM 7B.90**, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010.

<b>32nd session of the World Heritage Committee, Quebec City, Canada / 2 - 10 July 2008</b>
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The Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia submitted a state of conservation report dated 25 January 2008, confirming, in one page, that no significant progress has been made since the last session of the World Heritage Committee.

A joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the Historic Monuments of Mtskheta and to the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex invited by the State Party, with some delay due to political factors, took place from 2 to 10 June 2008, met all relevant Georgian representatives, and discussed the following issues:

*Legal framework*

The new Georgian Law on Cultural Heritage was adopted in June 2007. Different protection zones were defined in this legal instrument. In accordance with this Cultural Heritage Law and the Urban Planning Law, the Protected Areas Plans and Historic-Cultural Plans constitute the base for all urban planning documentation, including the Land Use Plans and General Plans.

The mission evaluated the national protection zones of Mtskheta approved by the joint Order of the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Economic Development "On the definition of the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones in Mtskheta" of 27 October 2006. The areas approved at the national level by this Order do not correspond to the boundaries of the protection areas of Mtskheta or its monuments, as inscribed on the World Heritage List, and which constitute the legal reference within the framework of the *World Heritage Convention*. This situation illustrates that the above-mentioned Order was prepared without any link with the *World Heritage Convention*, its *Operational Guidelines* and previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee.

At this time, the main threat to the property is the distribution or sale of lands situated within the protected area of the property, as part of a privatization process without any detailed legal regulations approved in conformity with the expectations of the World Heritage Committee. Numerous proposals submitted by the municipality were



already approved by the Ministry of Economic Development without any knowledge of the nomination dossier submitted by Georgia during the inscription of property.

The mission recommended:

- a) To inventory all lands already distributed within the protected areas of Mtskheta, and to halt any construction permits and works within the existing protected areas of the World Heritage property as inscribed;
- b) To immediately halt any land distribution or sale, as well as any construction within the protected area of Mtskheta as inscribed in 1994, the preparation and approval in conformity with the *World Heritage Convention*, its *Operational Guidelines*, the World Heritage Committee's decisions of the following documents:
  - "Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" defining the World Heritage property's status, the World Heritage properties' strict protected areas and its buffer zones with all necessary restrictive regulations,
  - Boundary clarification document to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, and if relevant, the boundaries modification proposal in order to clarify exact boundaries of protected areas of the World Heritage property and its buffer zones,
  - Plan of the protected areas ("Historic-Cultural General Plan"), Land Use Plan ("Plan of Regulation") and Master Plan ("General Urban Plan") of Mtskheta.

The mission also recommended the establishment of a "Special State Board on World Heritage" in order to officially share the responsibilities between all relevant State institutions and national, local and religious authorities in ensuring an appropriate legal protection and management of the important and outstanding heritage of Georgia.

#### *Management plan*

No management plan exists for the property. The mission noted that the concept of the management plan is not known by the authorities; as such plan does not correspond to the existing documents or rules. The Cultural Heritage Programme prepared each year by the Ministry of Culture is a unique framework for any activity concerning the cultural properties in Georgia, including the World Heritage properties.

The mission recommended that the preparation of a management plan for the World Heritage properties in Georgia should be added, as priority, to the Cultural Heritage Programme.

#### *Management system and institutional framework*

The management, monitoring and survey of the property are under the supervision of the Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture. The Georgian World Heritage Committee, created in 2006, assumes the role of coordinator of World Heritage issues.

The Greater Mtskheta State Archaeological Museum-Reserve, under the Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture, acts as the local site manager. However, the mission noted that this institution does not fulfill its role as World Heritage site manager as the function has not been clearly defined by the authorities.

A special Commission on Cultural Heritage was also created by the Patriarch of the Georgian Church but its function is still unclear. The responsibility for cultural heritage, management, protected areas, rules of maintenance and use of religious monuments is determined by the relevant State authorities, in accordance with the 2007 Law on Cultural Heritage, and with the 2002 Constitutional Agreement.

*Physical conditions of the major components of the nominated property*

a) Jvari Church

The mission underlined the serious problems at the Jvari Church. The general state of conservation of the monument is very critical due to the negative influence of natural conditions and climatic change. The conservation works of the Jvari Church should be started immediately involving international experts on stone conservation, as a follow up to the ICCROM training course organized in 2005.

The mission noted that new construction within the vicinity of the Jvari Church had been stopped, and recommended the removal of this inappropriate construction.

b) Svetitskhoveli Cathedral

The mission commented on structural problems at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral due to factors affecting the monument. The mission noted that no progress has been achieved in order to improve the global monitoring of the structures of the Cathedral. The mission recommended undertaking a global monitoring for the structural stability of the Cathedral and also undertaking special interventions for conservation of the important mural paintings of different periods in the interior of the Cathedral.

c) Samtavro Monastery

The authorities reported that stabilization works were completed between 2002 and 2003. The archaeological remains discovered during the reparation works were recovered by the new floor. The structure of the associated belfry outside of the church, which was in serious danger of collapse, was reinforced.

Within the direct vicinity of the church new monastic cells were recently built but did not affect the functional integrity of the property. However, taking into account the necessity to continue scientific investigation of the area, the lands around the walls should be reserved for relevant archaeological excavations and research studies.

Furthermore, the mission noted serious damage to the archaeological sites of the World Heritage property, which have been completely abandoned by the authorities. There are no conservation, protection and promotion activities in place and nothing has been suggested for the future. The mission confirmed that this part of the World Heritage property has completely lost its authenticity due to vandalism and absence of management.

In general, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the scope of the problems described even if the mission noted the progress accomplished by the State Party in attempting to prepare a legal and technical basis to address these problems.

**Decision 32COM 7B.90**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-08/32.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **31 COM 7B.96**, adopted at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007),
3. Notes the substantive efforts of the State Party in defining and establishing the Cultural Heritage Programme, including legal assessments and relevant conservation, protection measures;
4. Expresses its serious concern about the privatization processes of land situated in the vicinity of the World Heritage property, and strongly urges the State Party to

immediately halt these processes before the boundary clarification and the preparation of a "Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" defining the World Heritage property's status and its buffer zones are completed;

5. Recalls its request to the State Party to give highest priority to development of an integrated management plan for the property;

6. Invites the State Party to establish a Special State Commission on World Heritage in order to officially share the responsibilities between all relevant State institutions and national, local and religious authorities in ensuring an appropriate legal protection and management of this property;

7. Urges the State Party to immediately start the implementation of an integrated multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Church in coordination with ICCROM and relevant international experts on stone conservation;

8. Also expresses its serious concern about the state of conservation of the archaeological components of the World Heritage property, their progressive deterioration and the abandonment of conservation efforts by the State Party, noting that this loss has a major impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the property and further urges the State Party to develop a special programme on protection of all archaeological components;

9. Encourages the State Party to undertake global monitoring of the structural stability of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and implement special interventions for the conservation of the paintings;

10. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2009**, a progress report including all above mentioned documents, as well as the boundaries clarification document, and if relevant, the boundaries modification proposal, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009, **with a view to considering, in the absence of substantial progress, the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

<p><b>31st session of the World Heritage Committee, Christchurch, New Zealand, 23 June – 2 July 2007 Document WHC- 07/31.COM/7B</b></p>
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*Main threats identified in previous reports*

- a) Lack of a management mechanism;
- b) Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities;
- c) Need to re-define core and buffer zones;
- d) Loss of authenticity in recent works carried out by the Church.

*Current conservation issues*

The World Heritage Committee, at its 29th session (Durban, 2005), expressed "serious concern over the state of conservation of this property" and urged the State Party to take urgent and appropriate measures, including implementing the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003, defining appropriate core and buffer zones of the property, and addressing the problem of the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos

Palace that affect Mtskheta's outstanding universal value.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Georgia submitted on 12 March 2007 a state of conservation report dated January 2007 which covers a wide range of areas of concern:

The State Party recalls the justification supplied in the nomination document at the time of inscription, however does not provide a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. The State Party also attempts to articulate a Statement of Authenticity/ Integrity but not fully in accordance with the *Operational Guidelines*. In this regard, the State Party notes a significant number of losses of authenticity, including: The Palace of Catholicos-Patriarch

Anton II, inappropriate interventions by local clergy at the Svetitskhoveli Complex; erroneous “restoration” works (suspended in 2004), executed at the church of the Jvari Monastery; inappropriate reconstruction works at the six-apsed Church in Armaztsikhe-Bagineti.

The State Party also notes a number of monuments which have been “completely destroyed” as a result of the recent work:

- a) some bas-reliefs of the Jvari monastery;
- b) the belfry of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral;
- c) a part of the fortification system in Armaztsikhe-Bagineti.

ICOMOS finds these reports very worrying as in the circumstances the reported loss of authenticity implies a significant potential loss of outstanding universal value.

The State Party reports that in December 2005, the President of Georgia issued a Decree which reorganized the Mtskheta Museum-Reserve (1968) into the *Greater Mtskheta State Archaeological Museum-Reserve (2007)*. The State Party notes that in January 2007, the *Mtskheta Heritage Integrated Management Commission* was instituted within the Municipality to better coordinate at local level the “sustainable and integrated conservation and management of the cultural heritage located on the territory of Mtskheta”. However the State Party notes that no progress has been made in development of a management plan for the property and that the 2003 Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan was being used to guide short and long term decision making for the site.

The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS are very concerned that the State Party has not been able to pursue implementation of the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003. ICOMOS believes strongly, given evident different views about development between Church and State, and the already strong reported material losses of authenticity that it is of paramount importance that a management plan involving all stakeholders be developed urgently.

Furthermore, the State Party report provides a detailed monitoring overview of physical conditions of the four major components of the nominated property:

- a) Jvari Church: Apart from discussing difficult moisture management situations which threaten the survival of important frescoes, bas reliefs and materials, comments also concern unauthorized construction activities

undertaken by the Georgian Church on site. The report notes that though damaging efforts to reconstruct the northern small church have been halted, the church and the parekklesion remain without roofing.

b) Svetitskhoveli Cathedral: The report comments on structural problems at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The seventeenth century Bell Tower has been demolished, and that “absolutely erroneous “reconstruction” works” carried out on the recently discovered 11th century Melchisedec Palace have been very damaging. The State Party repeats comments of 2005 that “it is of paramount importance for the future of the monument that stratigraphic investigations, systematic archaeological excavations, and conservation should be initiated all over the churchyard...”.

c) Samtavro Monastery: The report notes that while stabilisation works were completed in 2003, a permanent solution to roofing the Cathedral has not been found and archaeological research had not been completed before the beginning of the “restoration” works inside the Cathedral. The report also notes that the associated belfry is in serious danger of collapse.

d) Armaztsikhe-Bagineti: The report notes that the six-apse church of the second and third centuries AD, excavated in the 1990s is in an alarming state, and that it has completely lost its authenticity due to priority given reconstruction over conservation of the discovered monument. The report also documents threats to monuments excavated in the 1940s, the roman-type baths, and the fortification system, the major part of which has been irretrievably lost.

As noted in earlier reports, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the severity and scope of the problems described, and the inability of the State Party to address these.

The State Party report further notes that on 27 October 2006, the Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport and the Minister of Economic Development issued a joint Order n° 3/471 – 1-1/1243 “*On the Definition of the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones in Mtskheta*”. This joint Order provides for the establishment of a series of zones to better focus protection in the territory of Mtskheta, including:

- a) The Immovable Monuments Protection Zone (IMPZ) to protect both physically and visually the monuments existing in the Mtskheta urban fabric: Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Samtavro Nunnery, Antiochia and Gethsimania Churches;
- b) The Construction Regulation Zone (CRZ), a buffer zone, aimed at protecting the integrity of the Mtskheta Historic Centre and its historical landscape;
- c) The Archaeological Heritage Protection Zone (AHPZ) including the major archaeological complexes located on the territory of Mtskheta and its surroundings;
- d) The Landscape Protection Zone (LPZ) to protect the “historically formed landscape as an indissoluble natural and cultural phenomenon”.

Following reports in earlier years of serious problems at the Jvari Monastery it is noted that the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia and ICCROM had launched a joint project (2005) aimed at monitoring, documentation and conservation of Jvari Monastery. The report also notes that a second phase of ICCROM's project will address development of a conservation plan for the site, and continue the training of Georgian specialists. Efforts to develop cooperation with the Council of Europe within the framework of the *Kyiv Initiative* Regional Programme, to assist Jvari are also mentioned.

Finally, the report a documentation project planned for 2007, with the support of the *Society and Heritage Association* (Georgia) and the World Monuments Fund is indicated. Such an integrated and multi-stakeholder approach to resolve the problems of Jvari Monastery is to be commended.

### **Decision: 31 COM 7B.96**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-07/31.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **29 COM 7B.64**, adopted at its 29th session (Durban, 2005),
3. Regrets the late submission of the state of conservation report by the State Party but notes substantive efforts in defining and establishing clear zones of protection;
4. Encourages the State Party to continue implementation of the integrated multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Monastery and urges the State Party in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop similar work programmes over the next ten years for the other monument complexes the property;
5. Strongly urges the State Party to give highest priority to development of an integrated management plan for the site to be built with the full involvement and collaboration all stakeholders based on the 2003 Masterplan;
6. Requests that the State Party invite a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to assess the state of conservation of the property, including reconstructions, new developments and any impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the property;
7. Also requests the State Party to provide a progress report to the World Heritage Centre on **1 February 2008** for examination by the Committee at its 32nd session in 2008.

<b>29 session of the World Heritage Committee, Durban, South Africa</b>
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*Main threat(s) identified in previous report(s):*

Lack of a management mechanism; insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities; need to re-define core and buffer zones.

*Current conservation issues:*

Following the decision by the Committee, the State Party requested on 17 March 2005 to change the name of the property to the "Historical Monuments of Mtskheta".

The State Party submitted a detailed state of conservation report on 13 February 2005.

Following the elaboration in 2003 of the "Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan" with the assistance of UNESCO/UNDP, the State Party recognised the urgent need to prepare a Management Plan for the property. According to the State Party, factors affecting the property include (1) lack of funding, (2) climatic conditions, (3) inappropriate interventions by the Church authorities and (4) absence of an effective management system.

ICOMOS' detailed comments and recommendations on the preparation of the well-structured and detailed report were transmitted to the State Party on 25 April 2005.

Concerning the Jvari Monastery, ICOMOS fully shared the concerns expressed in the State Party report on the state of conservation of both the interior and exterior of the main Church. There are serious problems of stonework maintenance and bas-relief protection. In addition, scaffolding from the earlier restoration work should be removed and a buffer zone must be defined. Therefore, ICOMOS recommended that (1) conservation and partial restoration is needed for the seriously damaged limestone blocks of the external facades. Soot, mildew, and parasites must be removed from certain building stones and capitals; (2) the carved building stones must be carefully removed without delay and taken to a special centre for stone conservation so that the crumbling parts can be strengthened. Thereafter, they should be on display in the Regional Museum. They should be replaced by replicas in accordance with Article 8 of the 1964 Venice Charter. The replicas should be distinguishable from the authentic building stones.

The attempts, now halted, to restore the Northern Church and Parekklesion also pose a significant problem. ICOMOS recommends that (1) specialized cleaning and treatment using herbicide, of the surrounding wall to remove plant growth, (2) repair work to the walling, including careful repair of the construction joints and restoration work in some sections. A protective layer should be put on the upper level, as protection against inclement weather conditions, (3) removal of later, minor constructions or their replacement where necessary (e.g. small wooden gates).

Concerning Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, the State Party reported on the continued and alarming state of the roofing, the bas-reliefs and ornaments of the cupola, and the facades of the monument. Unfortunately, no conservation work has been carried out

on the wall paintings inside the Church, which are of exceptional historical and artistic value. They are at grave risk of further damage and eventual disappearance.

ICOMOS considered that it is of paramount importance for the future of the monument that stratigraphical investigations, systematic archaeological excavations and conservation should be initiated throughout the entire churchyard in advance of 'Territory Maintenance'. Illicit underground construction inside and outside the Monastery grounds and unsupervised excavations carried out by local Church authorities should be prohibited. It is regrettable that the State Party provided no information on new building activities in the buffer zone of the monument, including the surrounding urban architectural ensemble. According to ICOMOS, the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos Palace continue to constitute one of the most difficult problems in preserving Mtskheta's outstanding universal value, since this building continues to be the residence of the Catholicos– Patriarch of Georgia.

ICOMOS regretted that the State Party report made no comment on the condition of the wall paintings inside the *Samtavro Nunnery Church*, which had been seriously damaged by plastering during the Soviet period (see *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003, p.51). The State Party report made no comment on the present condition of the Samtavro burial ground, the largest and one of the most important cemeteries in the Caucasus region. Short- medium- and long-term recommendations were made in *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003, p.37–40).

ICOMOS shared the views on the existing condition and work carried out at the important Armaztsikhe- Bagineti archaeological property. The proposals in *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003) have not been acted upon in the face of the very serious problems of excavation, conservation, protection and adaptation of this property in the city of Mtskheta. Some 'conservation' methods on the unfired brick walls are open to serious challenge as regards the protection and the underlying layout of the buildings.

#### **Decision 29COM 7B.64**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-05/29.COM/7B.Rev,
2. Recalling its Decision 28 COM 15B.69, adopted at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004),
3. Urges the State Party of Georgia to define core and buffer zones of the property;
4. Expresses its serious concern over the state of conservation of this property and urges the State Party to take urgent and appropriate measures;
5. Encourages the State Party to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003;
6. Recalls the importance of cooperation between the State Party and stakeholders for the conservation of the property.



7. Requests the State Party to solve the problem of the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos Palace that strongly affects Mtskheta's outstanding universal value.
8. Requests the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre with an updated report by 1 February 2007 for examination by the Committee at its 31st session (2007).

#### **29COM 8B.1 - Changes to Names of Properties (Historical Monuments of Mtskheta)**

At the request of the Georgian authorities the Committee is asked to approve a change to the English and French names of the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994.

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-05/29.COM/8B,
2. Approves the proposed name change to the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (Georgia) as proposed by the Georgian authorities. The name of the property becomes Historical Monuments of Mtskheta in English and Monuments historiques de Mtskheta in French.

**28 session of the World Heritage Committee,  
Durban, South Africa  
10-17 July 2005**

#### *Conservation issues:*

At the request of the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee, a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission was undertaken from 8 to 16 November 2003.

Despite the political situation in Georgia at that time, which made it difficult to organise meetings with the relevant authorities, the mission evaluated the state of conservation of the property, the management of the World Heritage site and consulted local stakeholders on how best to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003.

Subsequently, the Georgian authorities provided a state of conservation report on 25 February 2004, which addresses a number of conservation issues.

The Church of Georgia has constructed new buildings in the vicinity of the Cathedral of Sveti Tskhoveli, which in the opinion of the mission affects the character of the World Heritage site. While the basilica of the Cathedral is in a good condition, the inappropriate method used for the restoration of mural paintings is of particular concern as the mission observed surface abrasion and general deterioration. The mission noted further conservation problems that include damages on the defence wall and uneven ground level as well as an underground concrete structure outside the defence wall of the Cathedral. The Georgian Church constructed a bishop palace

within the ground, in view to demolish it later when another building is constructed outside the wall of the Cathedral.

The State Party further mentioned in its report that the Church has made some inappropriate interventions for the conservation of the property. The exterior of the Samtavro Monastic Complex is in a good condition but the mission could not obtain permission to examine the interior of the building. The state of conservation of Jvari is favourable, except it is necessary to remove the scaffolding from the earlier restoration work and to define a buffer zone for the property. The State Party stated in its report that inappropriate material was used to restore the small church of the Jvari Monastery.

The mission considers that the Master Plan for the World Heritage property needs to be implemented with a more active involvement of the local, regional and national authorities as well as the Church. The translation of the Master Plan into Georgian would further facilitate this process. Moreover, future developments should take into account the vision provided in the Master Plan and to keep the integrity of the World Heritage property by, for example, respecting the existing architectural styles and using local material. The mission explored different ways in which the Master Plan could be supported by different international and national organisations including the World Bank, Soros Foundation and UNDP.

The ICOMOS-UNESCO mission highlights an urgent need to clarify the extent of a core zone and to define buffer zones as appropriate. At the time of the inscription in 1994, ICOMOS evaluated the outstanding universal value of only three churches. The World Heritage Committee at its 18th session in 1994, therefore, suggested to the State Party to change the name of the property to the "Historic Churches of Mtskheta" but this has never been taken up. The Georgian authorities stated in their state of conservation report that they wish to extend the core zone of the property to include an area as defined by a triangle of the churches of Jvari, Samtavro and Armatsikhe. The mission of November 2003 supports the view taken by the State Party in order to ensure landscape integrity, while recognising potential problems in controlling future developments in the enlarged area. In accordance with the Constitutional Agreement with the State, the Georgian Orthodox Church owns all ecclesiastic buildings in Georgia. The report by the State Party confirmed the view of the mission that the interventions made by the Georgian Church for the conservation of the property are often inappropriate and the country lacks an overall process to manage urban development and other conservation issues at the national and local level.

#### **Decision 28 COM 15B.69**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Noting the outcome of the joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property,

2. Expresses its serious concerns for the lack of management mechanism for the property as well as insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities in safeguarding the outstanding universal value of the property;
3. Urges the State Party to change the name of the property to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta" as suggested by the World Heritage Committee at its 19th session in 1994, following the original ICOMOS evaluation at the time of the inscription that refers to the Churches of Jvari, Samtavro and Armatsikhe as the components of the property, and to prepare a detailed map indicating their core and buffer zones;
4. Encourages the State Party to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003;
5. Requests the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre an updated report by 1 February 2005 so that the World Heritage Committee could examine the state of conservation of the property at its 29th session in 2005.

<p><b>27 session of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII 30 June – 5 July 2003</b></p>
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The World Heritage Committee strongly urged the State Party of Georgia to provide, before 1 September 2002, a report on the on-going constructions and degradations at the site and requested that the authorities invite a UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to the site. To date no report has been received and pending the official invitation by the authorities, the experts identified by ICOMOS and the Centre were not able to undertake this mission.

#### **Decision 27 COM 7 (b) 62**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Recalling the decision taken at the 26th session of the Committee in 2002 (**26 COM 21 (b) 46**), to carry out a mission to the property and for a report to be provided by the State Party,
2. Reminds the State Party of its responsibilities as described in Article 6 of the *World Heritage Convention* to ensure the preservation and conservation of World Heritage properties;
3. Urgently requests the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the State Party to work closely together to ensure timely organisation of a joint mission and for a detailed report to be completed in order that the World Heritage Committee can examine the state of conservation of the property at its 28th session in 2004.

**26 session of the World Heritage Committee,  
Budapest, Hungary, 24 - 29 June 2002**

*Main issues:* The degradation and construction projects at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral are a cause for concern. The Bureau requested a report on the state of conservation and up-to date information on all the restoration and construction projects at the site.

*New information:*

At the time of the preparation of this document no report from the authorities had been received.

**Decision 26 COM 21 (b) 46**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Strongly urges the State Party of Georgia to provide before the 1 September 2002, a report on the on-going constructions and degradations at the site;
2. Requests the Government authorities to ensure that all these works are halted and that no further restoration works or constructions in close proximity to the Cathedral be undertaken;
3. Requests that the authorities invite an UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to the site in the near future and that a report be presented for examination at its 27th session in June/July 2003.

**23rd session of the World Heritage Committee,  
Marrakesh, Morocco, 29 November - 4 December 1999**

City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (Georgia)

From 1996 to 1999 an amount of US\$ 36,800 was made available under technical cooperation for expert services on a management and tourism policy. A preliminary study for a Master Plan for the heritage and tourist policy for the World Heritage site was prepared.

In September 1999, the major elements of this study were presented during a World Heritage Centre mission to potential donor institutions in the form of "Terms of Reference for 9 Actions". As a result, a project is being prepared with UNDP (to be financed by UNDP and the World Heritage Fund) for the development of a Heritage and Tourism Master Plan.

The mission team particularly noted the critical conditions of two archaeological sites: the Armaztsikhe and the Samtavros Veli sites. Furthermore, the mission took note of a plan to build a new bell tower within the enclosure of the cathedral.

The Observer of Germany inquired about the results of the previous assistance and pointed out that urgent interventions and rehabilitation works are needed in the site. These issues should be taken into account by the Committee when examining a request for technical co-operation for the preparation of the Master Plan.

The Bureau decided to transmit the report to the Committee for examination and recommended the following for adoption:

"The Committee welcomes the initiative of the Government of Georgia and the Mtskheta Foundation to develop a Heritage and Tourism Master Plan for the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta. It expresses its full support for this initiative that will provide the appropriate framework for a coherent set of actions to be financed by different sources and donor institutions. The Committee recognizes that on the middle and long-term major investments will be required for the actual implementation of the Master Plan and calls upon States Parties, international institutions and organizations to collaborate in this effort.

The Committee urges the Government of Georgia to take immediate measures for the protection of the Armaztsikhe archaeological site and for the recuperation of the total area of the Samtavros Veli Necropolis site. It requests the Georgian authorities to provide the plans for the bell tower at the cathedral for further study by ICOMOS."

<b>World Heritage Committee</b> <b>XVIII session / Phuket, Thailand / December 1994</b>
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The City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta : The Committee, in inscribing this property on the World Heritage List, suggested to the State Party to change the name to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta".

## GENERAL VIEWS



**A.** New town of Mtskheta

**B.** Bebristsikhe hill

**C.** House of Justice building site

**D.** "Pikris Gora" hill and development zone

**E.** Samtavro Valley

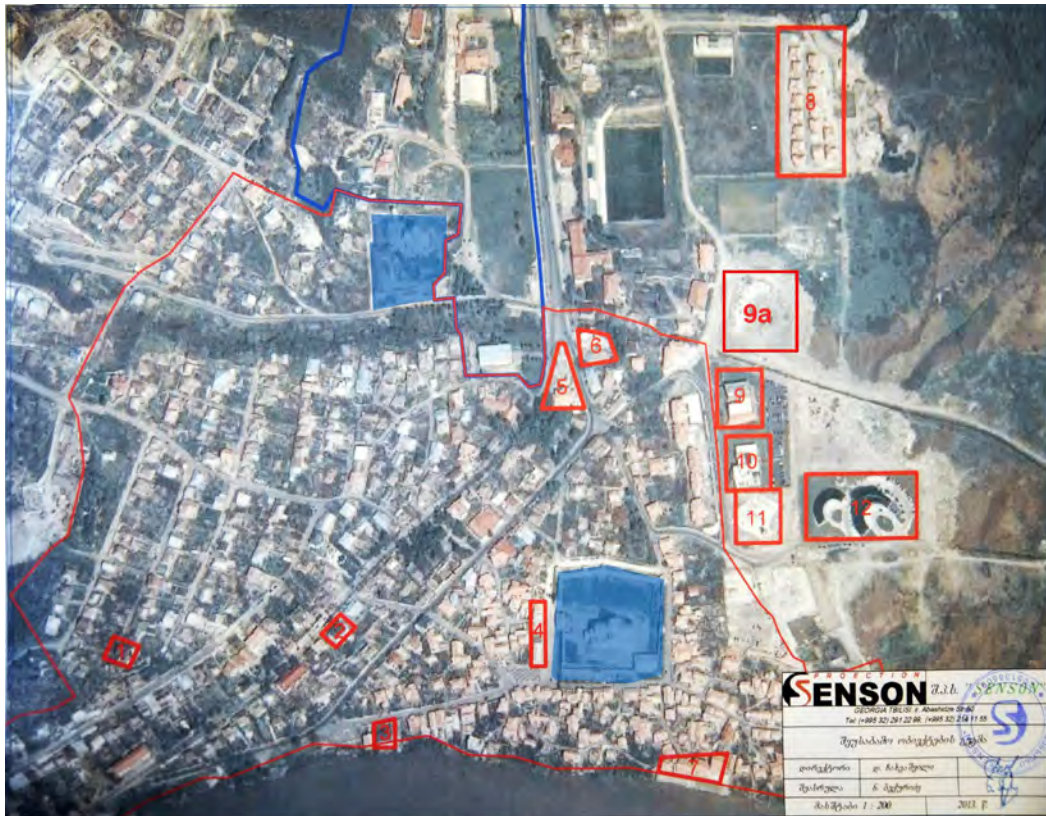
General view



View from Jvari hill

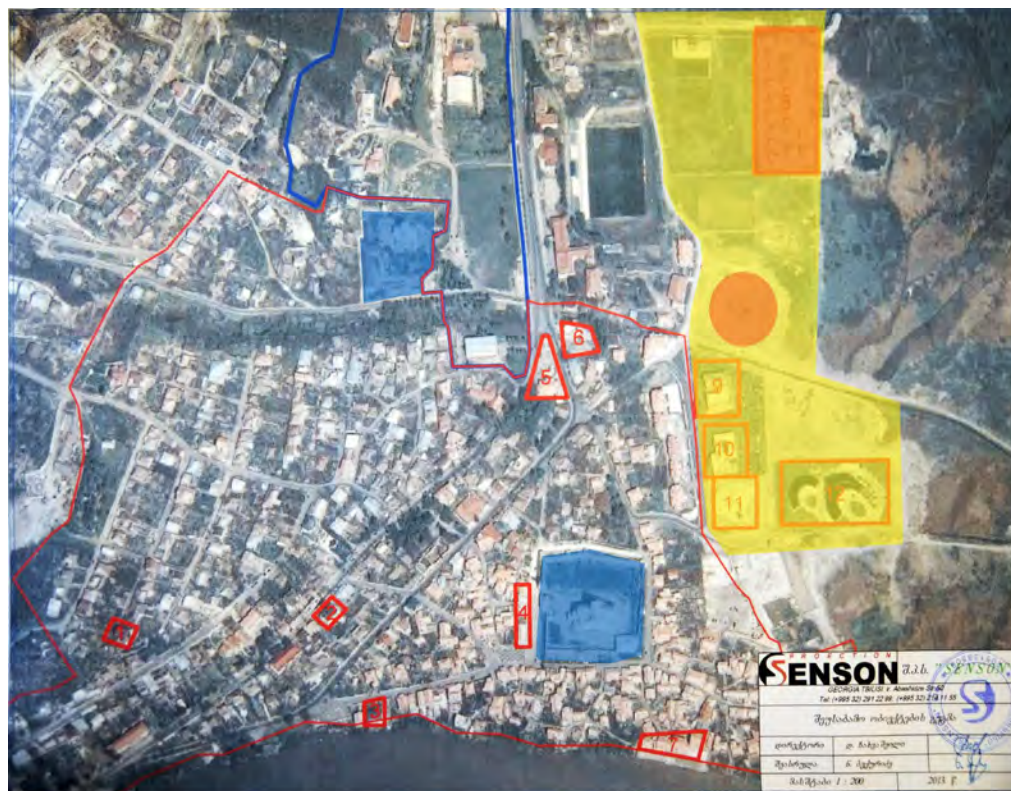


# GENERAL VIEWS



- Historical built-up area protection zone
- Archaeological protection zone
- New inadequate constructions
- World Heritage Sites

Map 1

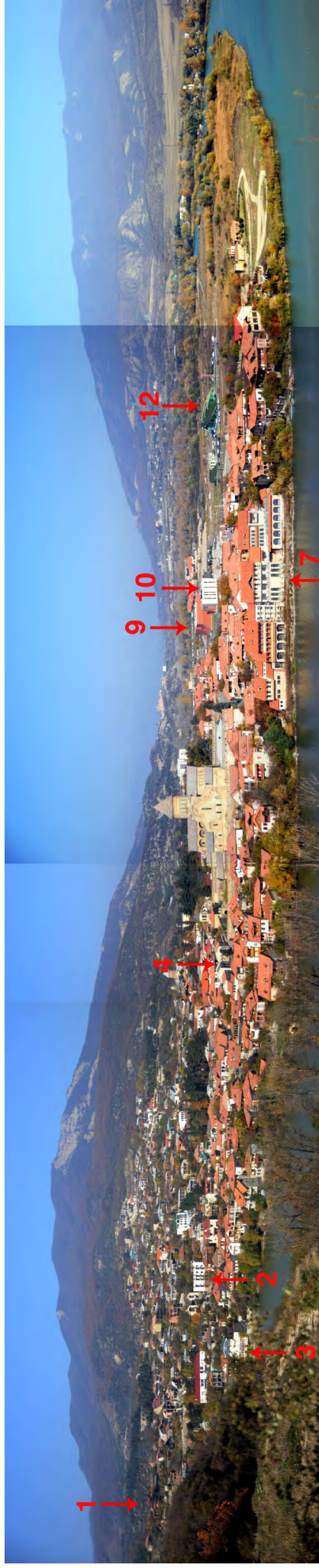


- Historical built-up area protection zone
- Archaeological protection zone
- New development area with public services
- Private residential development
- World Heritage Sites

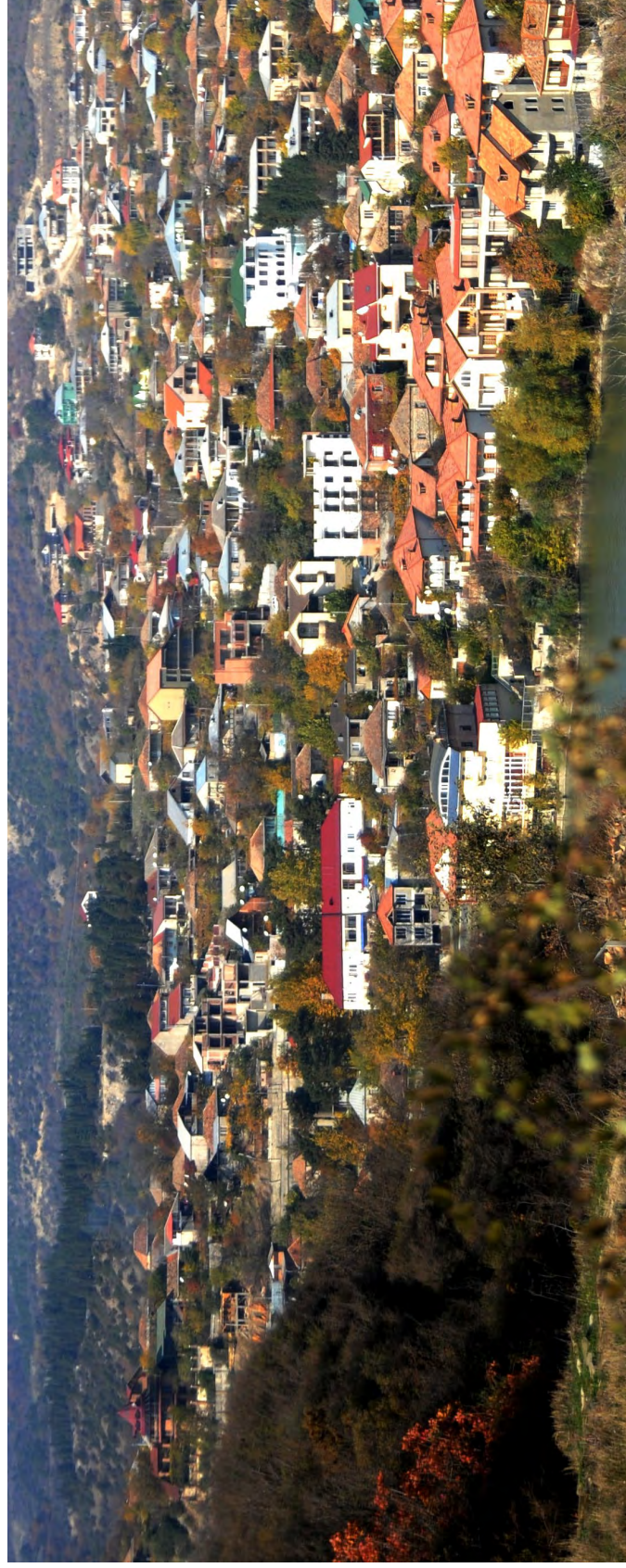
Map 2



## GENERAL VIEWS



View from Armaztsikhe hill - 1



View from Armaztsikhe hill - 2



# SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 1



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 2 (2010)



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 3 (2010)



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 4



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 5



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 6 (2010)



# SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 7



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 8



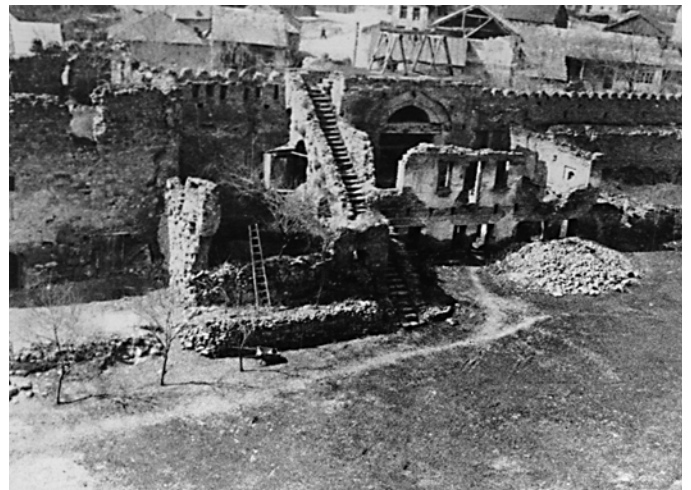
Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 9



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 10 (2001)



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 11



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 12 (end 19th c.)



# SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 13 (end 19th c.)



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 14 (2001)



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 15



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 16



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 17



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 18



# SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 19



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 20



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 21



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 22



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 23



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 24



# SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 25



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 26



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 27



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 28



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 29



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 30



## SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 31



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 32



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 33



Svetitskhoveli Cathedral 34



# SAMTAVRO NUNNERY



Samtavro Nunnery 1



Samtavro Nunnery 2



Samtavro Nunnery 3



Samtavro Nunnery 4



Samtavro Nunnery 5



Samtavro Nunnery 6



## SAMTAVRO NUNNERY



Samtavro Nunnery 7



Samtavro Nunnery 8



Samtavro Nunnery 9



Samtavro Nunnery 10

## SAMTAVRO VALLEY



Samtavro Valley 1



# SAMTAVRO VALLEY



Samtavro Valley 2



Samtavro Valley 3 looking S-E to Jvari (2001)



Samtavro Valley 4



Samtavro Valley 5



Samtavro Valley 7

Samtavro Valley 6



# SAMTAVRO VALLEY



Samtavro Valley 8



Samtavro Valley 9 (2010)



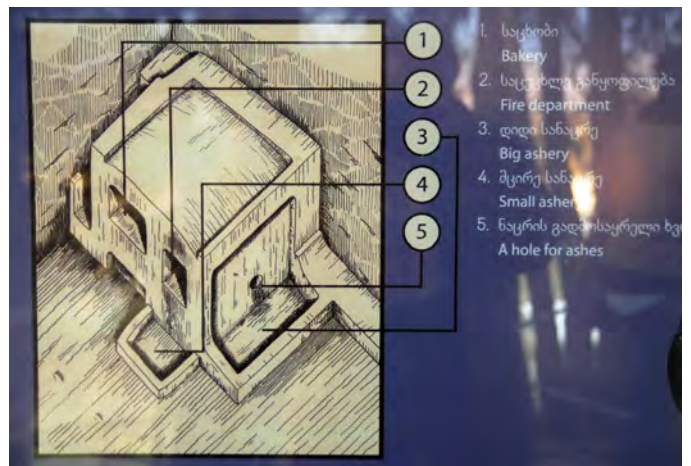
Samtavro Valley 10



Samtavro Valley 11



Samtavro Valley 12



Samtavro Valley 13



# JVARI MONASTERY



Jvari Monastery 1



Jvari Monastery 2



Jvari Monastery 3



Jvari Monastery 4



Jvari Monastery 5



Jvari Monastery 6



# JVARI MONASTERY



Jvari Monastery 7



Jvari Monastery 8



Jvari Monastery 9



Jvari Monastery 10



Jvari Monastery 11



Jvari Monastery 12



# JVARI MONASTERY



Jvari Monastery 13 (2010)



Jvari Monastery 14 (2010)



Jvari Monastery 15



Jvari Monastery 16



Jvari Monastery 17



Jvari Monastery 18



# JVARI MONASTERY



Jvari Monastery 19



Jvari Monastery 20



Jvari Monastery 21



Jvari Monastery 22



Jvari Monastery 23



Jvari Monastery 24



## JVARI MONASTERY



Jvari Monastery 25

## MTSKHETA CITY



From Armaztsikhe - Cathedral and east part of city (mid 19th c. photo by Dmitri Ermakov)



From Armaztsikhe - Cathedral and eastern part of city (2001)



# MTSKHETA CITY



From Armaztsikhe - Cathedral and eastern part of city (2014)



Houses as in 2010 and 2014



# MTSKHETA CITY



Mtskheta city 1a - Main street (2001)



Mtskheta city 1b - Main street (2014)



Mtskheta city 2a



Mtskheta city 2b (2001)



# MTSKHETA CITY



Mtskheta city 3



Mtskheta city 4



Mtskheta city 5



Mtskheta city 6



Mtskheta city 7



Mtskheta city 8



## MTSKHETA CITY



Mtskheta city 9



Mtskheta city 10



Mtskheta city 11



Mtskheta city 12



Mtskheta city 13 (2007)



## MTSKHETA CITY



Mtskheta city 14 (2008)



Mtskheta city 15



Mtskheta city 16



Mtskheta city 17



Mtskheta city 18



Mtskheta city 19



# MTSKHETA CITY



Mtskheta city 20a - typical street scene (2001)



Mtskheta city 20b - typical street scene (2001)



Mtskheta city 21



Mtskheta city 22



## MTSKHETA CITY



Mtskheta city 23a



Mtskheta city 23b (the same group of buildings as in 2001)



Mtskheta city 24a (2001)



Mtskheta city 24b (2001)



Mtskheta city 24c (2014)



## MTSKHETA CITY



Mtskheta city 25



Mtskheta city 27a



Mtskheta city 27b



Mtskheta city 27c



Mtskheta city 27d (2010)



## MTSKHETA CITY



Mtskheta city 27e (2010)



Mtskheta city 28



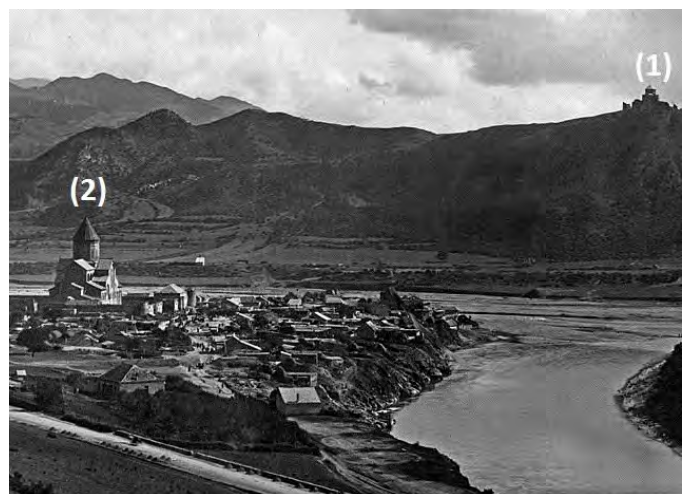
Mtskheta city 29



New building No 3



Mtskheta \_ early 20th century view across valley



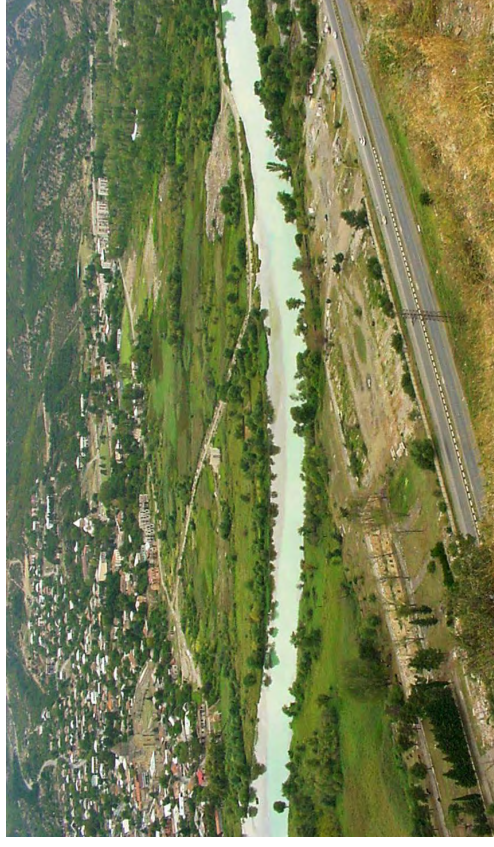
Mtskheta 19th century view



## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT ON ARAGVI RIVER BANK



Picture 1. Djvari viewpoint - 1889 (D. I. Ermakov)



Picture 3. Jvari viewpoint - Aragvi flood plain - 9.2001



Picture 2. Jvari viewpoint - panoramic view - 9.2001



## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT ON ARAGVI RIVER BANK



Picture 4. Jvari viewpoint - 18.9.2007



Picture 6. Jvari viewpoint - 25.4.2012



Picture 5. Jvari viewpoint - 3.2010



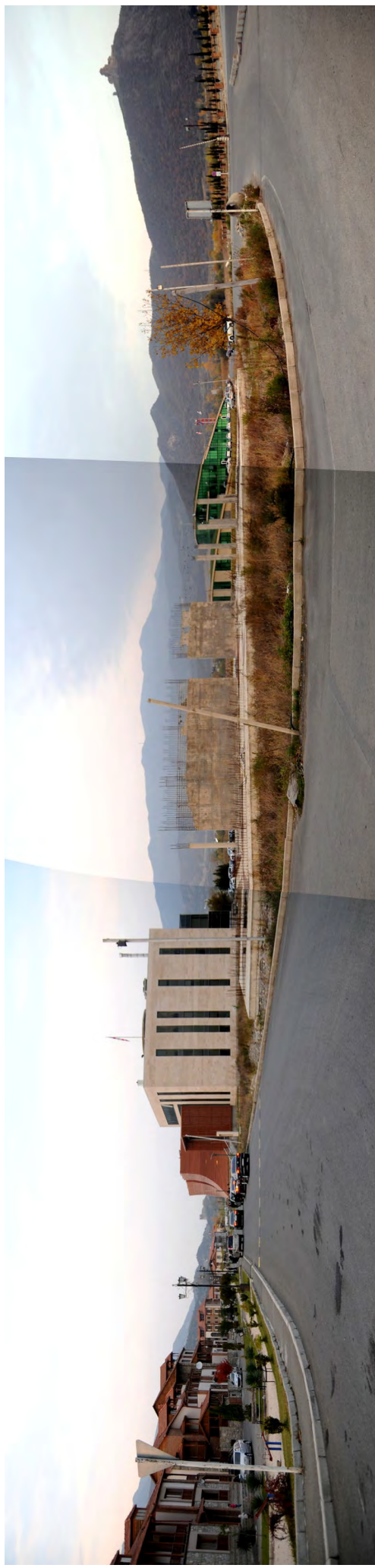
Picture 7. Jvari viewpoint \_ 1.2013



Picture 8. Jvari viewpoint \_ 11.2014



## NEW DEVELOPMENT ON ARAGVI RIVER BANK



New development 1



New development 2



## NEW DEVELOPMENT ON ARAGVI RIVER BANK



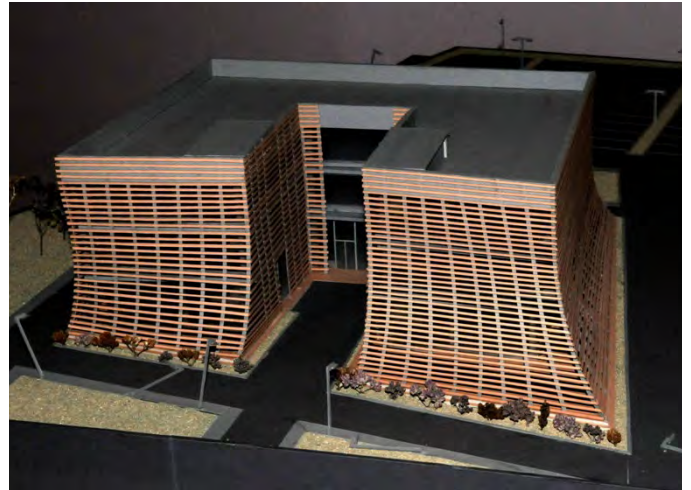
Police Station 1



Police Station 2



Police Station 3



Town Hall model



Town Hall



## NEW DEVELOPMENT ON ARAGVI RIVER BANK



Intellectual Property Center 1



Intellectual Property Center 2



Private residential complex



Remains of House of Justice building



Villa Mtskheta 1



Villa Mtskheta 2



# NEW DEVELOPMENT ON ARAGVI RIVER BANK



Municipal market 1



Municipal market 2



House of Justice project



House of Justice new site



## MEETINGS



Meeting with Local Authorities



Meeting in the Patriarchate