

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

BUREAU OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-third extraordinary session

Marrakesh, Morocco

26 - 27 November 1999

Information Document: Report submitted by HMG of Nepal on the progress made in implementing the 55 Recommendations of the 1998 Joint Mission for enhanced management and conservation of Kathmandu Valley World Heritage site, Nepal

Background: At its twenty-second session, the World Heritage Committee examined the findings and results of the Joint UNESCO-ICOMOS-HMG OF Nepal Mission, the 55 recommendations and Time-Bound Action Plan adopted by HMG of Nepal. The Committee decided to defer consideration of the inscription of the Kathmandu Valley site on the List of World Heritage in Danger until its twenty-third session. However, the Committee requested HMG of Nepal to continue implementing the 55 recommendations of the Joint Mission and to respect the deadlines of the Time-Bound Action Plan adopted by HMG of Nepal. At its twenty-third session, the Bureau requested HMG of Nepal to report on (a) the progress made in enforcing existing building regulations at Bauddhanath Monument Zone, (b) the technical and financial plan for correcting the illegal buildings immediately surrounding the stupa, and (c) further progress made in implementing the 55 recommendations before 15 September 1999 for examination by the twenty-third extraordinary session of the Bureau in November 1999.

Purpose: This Information Document is a summary report submitted by HMG of Nepal on the progress made by the Government in implementing the 55 Recommendations. A cost estimate for correcting the 86 illegal buildings in Bauddhanath Monument Zone was submitted to the Secretariat with this report. However, the report on the progress made in enforcing existing building regulations at Bauddhanath Monument Zone and the technical and financial plan for correcting the 86 illegal buildings in the Bauddhanath Monument Zone were not submitted.

Action of the Committee: This Information Document should be read together with the section concerning the state of conservation of Kathmandu Valley included in the Working Document WHC-99/CONF.209/14, as well as WHC-99/CONF.209/INF.17B and WHC-99/CONF.209/INF.17C.

HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL
MINISTRY OF YOUTH, SPORTS AND CULTURE
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

KATHMANDU VALLEY WORLD HERITAGE SITE

PROGRESS REPORT

Executive summary

His Majesty's Government, and the Department of Archaeology in particular, has taken extensive measures to undertake the 55 Recommendations with respect to the Time-Bound Action Plan contained within the report of the 1998 Joint Evaluation Mission to the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site. Measures to protect the integrity of the Site are being implemented at the highest level of Government, under the active support of the Right Honourable Prime Minister. Although the recent General Election and formation of a new government resulted in a short delay in the implementation of three out of sixteen actions, two others have been carried out in advance of the date specified in the Time-Bound Action Plan and the overall programme is well on schedule. The enhanced management of the World Heritage Site is being assured by the active participation of the inhabitants, NGOs, concerned municipalities and other bodies, in full co-operation with central government agencies. The programme of activities is linked to a wide-ranging programme of awareness building of World Heritage values in general and the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site in particular. The legal framework for protecting the integrity of the World Heritage Site has been strengthened by approval of the Ancient Monument Preservation Rules and remaining problems in overlaps in jurisdiction will be resolved by a further amendment to the Ancient Monument Preservation Act. Since the World Heritage Committee first discussed this issue in 1992, the management of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site has been transformed by a significantly strengthened system implemented by a developing partnership between all the stakeholders. World Heritage sites which form part of living communities in a period of rapid economic change and development inevitably present conservation problems, but the preservation of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site now compares well with many other World Heritage Sites, including some in much wealthier and more developed countries. This result has been achieved by a programme of co-operation between the His Majesty's Government, other authorities, international agencies such as UNESCO, and not least with the inhabitants.

Framework of Government support

On September 3rd 1999, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of the newly elected government, Mr. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, gave a special time for hearing details about the present situation of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site and asked all the concerned line agencies to give special attention to fulfilling the 55 recommendation within the stipulated timeframe. We are very glad to be able to inform World Heritage Bureau that, out of 16 time-bound actions (from May 7, 1998 to July 1999) 13 actions have been successfully completed. The remaining three actions are also started after the approval of the IIIrd Amendment to the Ancient Monument Preservation Rules by the Cabinet. This short delay was caused by the General Election and formation of the new government.

In addition, two more actions (fixing stone boundary markers and a plaque in Bhaktapur World Heritage Monument Zone), for which a completion date for November 1999 had been stipulated, have also been completed ahead of schedule.

The on going activities to implement the remainder of the 55 Recommendations are receiving special attention not only from the government side, but also from the local people, different local NGOs, Heritage Societies and concerned Municipalities. One example we can present here

concerns Bhaktapur Municipality, which has given a Peace Award by the UNESCO Bangkok office for its outstanding heritage management.

The Updated progress report on the implementation of measures to safeguard the integrity of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site is given below:

In the Report of the UNESCO/ICOMOS/His Majesty's Government of Nepal Joint Evaluation Mission of March - April 1998 it is noted that:

ICOMOS concludes that the single overriding issue in protecting the integrity of the KVVHS is the control of damaging and illegal development. With few exceptions, the principal religious and public monuments are secure and require only normal maintenance. However, the traditional houses and commercial buildings, which form the essential setting of KVVHS Monument Zones are at great risk and are subject to extreme development pressure. If re-development continues, the authenticity of KVVHS will be so severely damaged as to compromise its outstanding universal value.

Immediately after the conclusion of the Mission, His Majesty's Government took swift and effective action to provide strong new initiatives to address this problem. Although it should be recognised that in a rapidly developing country such as Nepal, pressures will inevitably be greater than in a developed country where such rapid change occurred in the past and where unchallenged conservation strategies are more easily secured. Since this fiscal year, His Majesty's Government has allocated a lump sum of money to give up to ten per cent to those house owners who have built their houses as per the approved design and the prevailing guidelines.

Institutional development

A key action taken by the government was the creation of a large Heritage Conservation Unit to manage and monitor the World Heritage Site. Out of the eighteen permanent new posts created, sixteen members of staff have already been appointed by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture. They have already started their duties to monitor regularly the seven Monument Zones of the World Heritage Site.

Control of development within the World Heritage Site is being carried out in collaboration with the municipal authorities.

Bhaktapur

Bhaktapur Municipality has recently completed an extensive documentation programme with Technical Co-operation support from the World Heritage Fund. Bhaktapur Municipality has already established a strong Heritage Conservation Unit with a team of skilled technical manpower.

Bhaktapur Municipality has been given a Peace Award by the UNESCO Bangkok Office for its outstanding management of the World Heritage Site. This is the best example of the management of one of the Monument Zones of Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site.

Kathmandu Metropolitan City

On 7 June 1999, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, which is responsible for four out of the seven Monument Zones of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site, launched the Greater Kathmandu Valley Mapping Project, an extensive urban planning programme to take place over four years

with the support of the European Commission.

The Aerial Photography and Mapping of the Kathmandu Valley have already been started. Mapping and Photographic documentation of the Hanuman Dhoka Monument Zone will be started as soon as possible. As per the discussion between the Director General of Department of Archaeology and Mr. Vittorio Pereto, European Union Consultant in charge of the heritage management scheme in Kathmandu, a confirmation letter from the Kathmandu Valley Mapping Programme has already been received by the Department of Archaeology in relation to the preparation of a Master Plan for the preservation and restoration of historical monuments of the Hanuman Dhoka Monument Zone.

To ensure enhanced management of the two Monument Zones, which have presented particular problems, a survey, inventory and proposals for environmental enhancement is being prepared for Baudhanath Monument Zone. The technical and tentative financial report for correcting the illegal buildings surrounding the Stupa following the detail guidelines of ICOMOS is attached herewith.

Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City

Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City, the local authority for Patan Darbar Square Monument Zone, which encompasses 20 per cent of the historic city, has created a professionally staffed Heritage Unit, which includes a highly qualified conservation architect who has been trained within the Department of Archaeology with UNESCO assistance. A further programme of capacity building and institutional development is planned with the support of the European Union's Asia Urbs Programme, through a link with the ancient City of Chester (UK). It is hoped that this project will receive approval from the European Commission in October 1999.

Strengthening the legal framework

The Ancient Monument Preservation Rules have already been approved by the Cabinet, which was one of the questions raised by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee at its 23rd Session (5-10 July, 1999).

Experience in implementing conservation legislation since February 1996, when the Fifth Amendment to the Ancient Monument Preservation Act came into legal effect, have shown that there are problems of overlaps in jurisdiction between the Department of Archaeology, the Municipalities, the Guthi Trust and Kathmandu Valley Town Development Committee. In consequence, it is necessary to review the current legal system and the Department of Archaeology has already started the draft for the Sixth Amendment of the Ancient Monument Preservation Act, to ensure that any remaining problems of legal protection are resolved.

Public awareness

For creating enhanced public awareness about World Heritage values, the Department of Archaeology has recently undertaken several initiatives. A new leaflet has recently been prepared in the Nepali language by the Department of Archaeology, which contains attractive photographs of traditional houses and new buildings appropriately designed as per the guidelines. In order to heighten public awareness on the value of Cultural Heritage, this leaflets are being distributed to the local people.

An Interaction Programme was held in Patan on 1st September and in Kathmandu on 7th September, 1999, under the chairmanship of the Honourable Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Ministry, with the participation of school teachers, students and different agencies and organisations involved in cultural heritage conservation. As a result of this Interaction Programme,

some of the schools and NGOs have already requested the Department to enable them to become partners in preserving the integrity of the Cultural Heritage Site through participation in conservation activities connected with specified monuments and their surroundings.

Since July 1999, Patan Museum has exhibited a regular video programme on the importance of the cultural heritage of Patan World Heritage Monument Zone for the visitors to the museum.

To emphasise the importance of conforming to the design guidelines for any new buildings constructed in the World Heritage Site, the Nepal Tourist Guide Association organised at Patan a prize distribution ceremony to distribute prizes to those house owners who have built their house with great respect to the prevailing guidelines. The Honourable Minister, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, was the chief guest at the ceremony.

Bhaktapur Municipality also organised a prize distribution ceremony on 8th September 1999 to distribute awards to the best traditional religious dance groups of Bhaktapur, who had been selected among the dances which have been played during Gai Jatra Festival. This illustrates appreciation of the importance of preserving the intangible heritage of the Kathmandu Valley.

The International Day for Culture and Peace, i.e. 14th September, 1999, was celebrated by distributing badges to the local and international tourists by the chiefs of the Historical Palaces and Monument Maintenance Offices of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu Darbar Square.

Achieving compliance with planning regulations

As a result of the benefits which can now be offered, the Department of Archaeology has achieved considerable success in ensuring compliance with approved designs - previously the principal weakness in planning control - combined with a greatly enhanced programme of monitoring. The use of traditional materials is also being successfully promoted, including the use of high-quality traditional daci apa and moulded bricks. Since this fiscal year, His Majesty's Government has allocated a lump sum of money to give up to ten percentage of the cost of the house to those house owners who conserve or build their houses as per the approved design and the prevailing guidelines.

Promoting the preservation of the built heritage

Permits for the demolition of traditional houses are only granted in those cases where the technical co-ordination committee agrees that they are in too poor condition to be repaired.

One of the problems which has previously existed is a lack of examples of traditional buildings sympathetically adapted to modern living. In order to fill this gap, the World Heritage Centre providing support for a number of conversions, which will provide exemplars for inhabitants to encourage adaption and reuse and reduce demands for replacement. A historic resthouse in Bhaktapur is being converted with funds provided by a Swedish commercial donor and the conversion of the Shrestha house in Patan with the financial support from the National Federation of UNESCO Association of Japan. This renovation work will be started in September 1999. To continue the same initiative, this pilot project in Patan will be followed up with the conversion of the Rajbhandari House and proposals for a further four projects are being prepared, for which UNESCO will seek funding. These conversions - in Patan, Changu Narayan, Bhaktapur and the proposed new Monument Zone of Khokana, will form a network of sympathetically converted traditional houses to help the inhabitants of the World Heritage Site envision ways in which they can live a modern life within traditional buildings, or develop suitable alternative uses. This programme will result in an enhanced value being given to traditional houses and is being carried out in co-operation with community-based NGOs and local authorities.

Public information on World Heritage

A meeting of the Campaign Review Committee of the International Safeguarding Campaign for the Kathmandu Valley was held in mid July 1999. It was organised jointly by His Majesty's Government, Department of Archaeology, and UNESCO to highlight the importance and safeguarding of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site in an international context.

Information leaflets in English and Nepali have already been published on each of the seven Monument Zones. To provide physical evidence of their extent, the programme of fixing stone boundary markers in the form of traditional stelae (which display the World Heritage logo and the words 'World Heritage' in Nepali and English) are being rapidly completed, combined with fixing bronze plaques explaining their World Heritage significance in the centre of each Monument Zone. At present, Bhaktapur Municipality has completed fixing stone boundary markers delineating Bhaktapur Darbar Square Monument Zone as part of the documentation programme supported by the World Heritage Fund. Stone stelae marking the boundaries of Hanuman Dhoka Darbar Square and Swayambhu Monument Zones have already completed by the Department of Archaeology and at Patan Darbar Square Monument Zone with the support of UDLE/GTZ.

Conservation of individual monuments

ICOMOS has noted that **the principal religious and public monuments are secure and require only normal maintenance**, but nevertheless the Department of Archaeology is continuing its extensive programme of restoration and maintenance. At present, Kasthamandap, one of the oldest monument of Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, Jagannath Temple of the same square and Bhimsen Temple of Patan Durbar Square are under restoration. Besides the Department of Archaeology is restoring many other monuments in co-operation with the Municipalities, NGOs, international agencies and private donors and owners. The number of projects is so large that they cannot be detailed in this report, but examples are the re-roofing of the Pashupati Temple in Bhaktapur, one of the earliest in the World Heritage Site, supported by Bhaktapur Municipality, and the recently discovered wall paintings in Sundari Chowk, Patan Palace, which will be restored in November 1999 with the support of the Sumitomo Foundation (Japan).

Developing the relationship of the World Heritage Site with its hinterland

Success in managing the World Heritage Monument Zones must be linked to the well-being of the inhabitants, who should not be economically disadvantaged by World Heritage status. Benefits from tourism should be passed to the inhabitants and not be retained by tour operators and large hotels. Initiatives in Patan Darbar Square Monument Zone will provide a model for involving the populace of the city itself and in the rural villages in its hinterland to the south. A new tourist route through the city is being developed with the support of UDLE/GTZ and the UNESCO Kathmandu office in co-operation with the community-based Patan Tourism Development Organisation. Cultural projects in a group of villages to the south of the city are being developed with the support of the European Union, the UNESCO Kathmandu office and the Lalitpur Heritage Group, as pilot projects for sustainable tourism designed directly to benefit the local inhabitants.

Summary

Nepal is not a rich country and, like most developing countries, is affected by rapid social and economic change, which puts pressure on traditional environments and lifestyles, especially since most of the World Heritage Site forms part of living cities. Nevertheless His Majesty's Government is co-operating with the other stakeholders to implement an extensive and diverse programme of enhanced management and protection for the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site, in close co-operation with UNESCO. These combined measures will ensure the protection of the integrity Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site for future generations of humankind.