



Extended 44th Session of the World Heritage Committee

Oral statement on 7B.33 Kathmandu Valley

Thank you Mr. Chair.

The main reason why restoration work at the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage was hampered after the 2015 earthquake was not the lack of funding - but poor management, poor planning and uncoordinated implementation carried out by the Department of Archaeology (DoA), which is the official authority in dealing with World Heritage issues.

The slow recovery process is partly due to the lack of DoA's authority caused by conflicting and overlapping responsibilities with other organizations.

There is a boundary conflict between the planned ring road widening and the Swayambhu World Heritage Site. Major religious devotional buildings were constructed in Swayambhu without required government permits, and neither were they communicated to the World Heritage Centre.

A proposed Master Plan for the development of Pashupatinath is an example of infraction on a major religious site. Big constructions are carried out on the site, and no valid environmental or heritage impact studies have been carried out.

The Bhaktapur Municipality plans to destroy a Rana building of the former royal palace.

Restoration work is of poor quality due to the "lowest bidder" tender system which favors the employment of less-skilled craftspeople. The promised amendment of the procurement and hiring laws has not taken place. Examples are the Anantapur temple at Swayambhu where sub-standard mortar was employed, and the Patan Museum which remains incompletely restored after six years.

Listing the Kathmandu Valley as endangered might work as an incentive to increase funding, but moreover to give the government the message that it must develop one single competent and empowered agency to look after conservation management.

Thank you Mr. Chair.