

**Recommendations of the Seventh Expert Working Group on the Preservation of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley
Munich, 12–13 June 2008***

* Abridged version without conservation of wall paintings, archaeological investigations, implementation of the cultural master plan and further preparation of the management plan, and training.

Consolidation and Conservation of the Giant Buddha Niches and Sculptures:

The Participants of the Working Group

- 1. Appreciate the work of all international experts on the Giant Buddha niches and acknowledge the successful completion of emergency operations in consolidating both niches. In order to ensure the stability of the niches in the future, regular supervision of the existing manual crack gauge system and monitoring and regular cleaning of the existing drainage network on top of the cliffs of both Buddha niches is necessary;*
- 2. Appreciate the successful installation of the Messerschmitt scaffold construction in the Eastern Giant Buddha niche and recommend its finalization to make the back walls accessible to restorers, engineers and geologists, and foresee a similar scaffold in the Western Giant Buddha niche after successful completion of the salvaging works;*
- 3. Acknowledge the substantial progress made by ICOMOS experts in the salvaging of the fragments of the two Giant Buddha sculptures and endorse the finalization in 2008/09 for the Western Giant Buddha niche: for the protection of the material semi-permanent shelters are to be constructed;*
- 4. Acknowledge the geological and rock magnetic documentation already applied on a test trench in the bottom part of the backside of the Western Giant Buddha*

- niche and the almost completed documentation of the back wall of the Eastern Buddha niche made possible by the installation of the scaffold construction. The completion of this important work in both niches is further recommended. Also, the detailed rock mechanical damage assessment of the niches should be completed;*
5. *Acknowledge the progress of the geological mapping combining the documentation of the backsides of both Buddha niches with the identification of the salvaged fragments. The documented and measured fragments will all be included in the 3D models of the Eastern and Western Buddhas. The 3D model of the Western Giant Buddha shall be completed with newly acquired 3D measurements after the removal of the remaining material in the niche;*
 6. *Recommend as a priority the conservation of the original surface fragments in-situ at the back wall of the East Buddha niche by a restorer. The appropriate conservation strategy for the endangered parts of the backside (e.g. shoulders, head) has to be defined jointly using all the necessary technical expertise. Note that the conservation of the back walls of the Western and Eastern Buddha niches has to take into account the specific qualities of the cliff material within each layer, as documented by the research of the geological and rock-mechanical analysis executed by the ICOMOS team and other international experts. It is recognized that only in the Eastern Buddha niche there are larger parts of the original surface material of the sculpture that have to be urgently conserved by restorers. Therefore, the Eastern and Western Buddha niches require different conservation approaches;*
 7. *Note the necessity to increase the carrying capacity of the wire mesh at the back wall of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche by additional steel wire ropes;*
 8. *Acknowledge the preparatory work for the reconstruction of the partition walls at the base of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche (destroyed by the explosion in 2001) in order to increase the overall stability of the niche. This work should be completed in 2008/09;*
 9. *Note that the monitoring results from the buttress of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche indicated no necessity of immediate action, however, monitoring should continue;*
 10. *Recommend for the long-term preservation of all fragments, a reversible step-by-step strategy reflecting the different location and the mass of existing material: the 'Big Buddha' has a large amount of massive fragments (up to 70 t), the "Small Buddha" has original plaster surfaces and rock fragments in situ (right arm with robe, fragments of shoulders and head). The completed identification of all fragments can be considered as a first step. A second step would be the adequate semi-permanent storage of the documented material close to the Buddha niches, considering the possibilities of reassembling;*
 11. *Consider further proposals for the technical possibilities of an anastylosis (refer to Article 15 of the Venice Charter) as a method of reassembling the fragments of the Buddha sculptures based on a re-evaluation of the specific, 'concrete' conditions. Different possibilities of reassembling individual fragments should be considered and be discussed by the Advisory Board at the appropriate time;*
 12. *Acknowledge the salvaging of plaster pieces, wooden pegs and strings from the surface of the Buddha sculptures (around 8000 pieces) which will be stored in 2008 in the newly built storage rooms at the Bamiyan Training Centre. It is further recommended that the extraordinary relic and fragments of birch manuscript found in 2006 be conserved by appropriate specialists.*