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Charters and Legislation on Architectural Preservation: Pakistan:

(DRAFT)

National Charter for the Conservations and Preservation of Cultural Property: Lahore

1.0 Preamble

1.1 Pakistan with its specific geographical and social background has a history of cultural evolution and problems of its own. Accordingly having regard to the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice 1966) and the Resolution of the 5th General Assembly of ICOMOS(1978), the following charter is proposed to be adopted for Pakistan.

2.0 Objective

2.1 The cultural heritage that exists today in physical form and in historical records, is the common heritage of us all, giving us an awareness of our common history and common future, as well as being an essential part of our cultural identity. Being custodian of this common heritage, we are responsible for its preservation and continuation for the benefit of our present as well as future generations. This responsibility is to be shared jointly and scrupulously by the society so that its continuity is ensured in the full richness of its authenticity for the times to come.

3.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this Charter:

3.1 **Cultural Property:** means historical monuments, buildings, groups of buildings or areas, historic garden archaeological sites and structural remains, and their traditional environmental settings, works of art and science & technology or any part or portion thereof. Historic areas in urban or rural settings containing vernacular architecture forming a physical environment of exceptional quality also form part of cultural property.

3.2 **Conservation:** means all processes to ensure retaining the particular value(s) of a cultural property. It includes interventions normally referred to as maintenance, rehabilitation, revitalization, relocation for adaptive or extended use, retrieval and recycling.

3.3 **Preservation:** means maintaining the existing state of cultural property and retarding its deterioration, including relocation for preserving.

3.4 **Restoration:** means returning the existing fabric of the cultural

property to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components with or without introduction of new materials.

4.0 National Policy

4.1 The conservation and preservation of cultural property be carried out under a uniform national conservation policy. This policy be formulated to outline priorities for categorization of cultural property at the three levels i.e. national, regional & local levels, and in interventions required thereto. Under this national policy the functions of concerned national organizations be coordinated and cooperation extended to international agencies entrusted with conservation of cultural heritage.

4.2 A body of noted professionals from all related disciplines and intelligentsia be formed to formulate, update and monitor the national conservation policy.

4.3 As a matter of policy efforts be made to bring cultural property moved out of country back to its place or setting of origin.

5.0 Guiding Principles

5.1 The aim of conservation is to retain or recover the value of cultural property and to ensure its future by security and maintenance.

5.2 Effective measures be taken to make public aware of the need and value of conservation and preservation of cultural heritage, and to promote participation from all spheres of the society.

5.3 Interventions for conservation and preservation be timely and aimed as minimum necessary. These interventions should be reversible and not prejudice future interventions, if technically possible. These should also be harmonious with original material and setting and should in no way attempt to alter authenticity of the cultural property.

5.4 Items of cultural value which form an integral part of a monument or site may only be removed from it if this is the sole means of ensuring their preservation.

5.5 The process of restoration must aim to preserve and enhance the aesthetic and historic value of the monument. It must stop at point where conjecture begins, and all interventions must be distinct and carry a contemporary stamp.

5.6 Conservation activity be recognized as separate from normal building activity. It be made distinct part of national, regional and local planning policy, be provided with special non-lapsable funds; and be carried out by trained and experienced professionals and craftsmen. Economic and social incentives are required to ensure survival of traditional building crafts which are necessary for conservation of historic buildings.

5.7 Traditional urban environment identified as cultural property be protected from transformation of its character through economic and social pressures present within and outside of the historic precincts. Area rehabilitation and change of use be directed towards being compatible with traditionally existing pattern and strengthening the local conservation policy.

5.8 Public be made an active partner in the conservation effort. Cultural property, whether in public or private ownership be promoted as national asset. Society should share to discourage illicit activities in clandestine excavation operations and trade of cultural objects, and encroachments in and around areas of cultural significance be made a taboo. Involvement of local concerned public groups is a must for protection and preservation of cultural heritage. Private donors must also be encouraged to participate in funding of conservation efforts.

5.9 Living religious movements form a substantial portion of our cultural heritage. Traditional 'waqf' system be channelized to contribute in conservation effort. All interventions to bring religious monuments be in harmony with their use, sympathetic to the faithful, allow future interventions and should not alter or destroy physical historical evidence.

5.10 Efforts must be made to fully document all cultural property. All interventions must be scientifically documented before, during and after carrying out and should aim at preserving historical and archaeological evidence.

5.11 As an essential pre-requisite to conservation, the existing legal framework should be re-examined with a view to strengthening it as necessary. The planning boundaries of protected buildings, sites or areas should extend sufficiently into their surroundings to have an effective control over their immediate environs for their preservation.

5.12 Additions to or improvement and upgrading of services and facilities for cultural heritage monuments and areas should only be permitted if dictates of their architectural, aesthetic and environmental significance are strictly and scrupulously obeyed.

5.13 Wherever possible efforts be made to make preventive measures effective against natural disasters for preservation of cultural property. In no case desire for reconstruction after a nature or man caused disaster should result in pulling down of remains of cultural property. Salvage must be the first recourse considered after such disasters.

5.14 Archaeological sites are amongst the richest of our national cultural assets, yet have remained the least studied. Archaeological digs should be encouraged to increase our wealth of knowledge on past cultures of the area. Local resources & expertise are available and willing, and must be harnessed for the purpose. Rapid urbanization makes it all the more urgent to work on excavation on known & unknown historical sites around urban centers before valuable evidence is lost or covered up for ever.

5.15 It is recognized that, cultural heritage encourages tourist activity. The policy for promotion of tourism should not be in conflict with the conservation policy and effort. It is best that economic gains from tourism are absorbed locally.

6.0 Promotional activities

6.1 The cultural heritage will only survive if its value is understood and appreciated by the people and in particular by the younger generation. A positive will to preserve our cultural heritage is emerging and need to be promoted.

6.2 Promotion of conservation education is to be encouraged through academic institutions, as well as through publication and mass media. Special programmes meetings, exhibitions and seminars etc. aimed to arouse public awareness and interest are also useful. Scientific publication and documentation be properly prepared and made available to public through archival records.

6.3 Improvement of presentation at sites and museums to enhance understanding of their cultural significance will help for publicizing the cultural heritage and encouraging public involvement in their conservation.

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