

## CONSERVING THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE OF YANGON CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND HISTORIC CENTRE OF VIENNA

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**ABSTRACT** : This paper highlights the key problems in heritage conservation of the historic areas in Yangon especially Yangon Central Business District (CBD) and factors influencing the management and conservation of historic landscape in Yangon, Myanmar, such as historic impacts of planning and development ideologies and the regulative effects of planning instruments and organizational structures. Revising numerous documents, reports and field observation revealed the problems of CBD in relation to conservation of historic landscape. The conservation of historic urban landscape concept had been reviewed from the international definitions and standards and guidelines and current initiatives for the conservation of historic landscapes. The research critically reviewed the legislations and institutional arrangements concerning with conservation and management of historic core areas of cities such as Yangon CBD and historic core of Vienna. The research also investigated how international practice in conservation such as historic urban landscape management can be modified to be relevant for conserving Yangon CBD. Questionnaires were sent to concerned people from Yangon to get their opinions and views on measures for proper planning legislation for conservation of historic urban landscape. The research highlighted on how shortcomings in Yangon CBD's planning and conservation legislation address conservation of historic urban landscape. Finally, research investigated the effectiveness of current planning legislations for conservation, with reference to representative cross-sections of Yangon CBD and historic centre of Vienna and recommendations had been given regarding the implications for integrating the conservation of historic city centre concept into Yangon CBD's planning and management system.

Key words: conservation, legislation, institutional arrangements, Yangon CBD, Vienna Historic Centre, historic urban landscape

### 1. INTRODUCTION

First of all, it is interesting to have a look how historic urban landscape has been defined in international charters. The value of historic urban landscape is reflected on not only physical elements such as topography, buildings, details of construction and vegetation but also on the traditional way of life of local community. UNESCO World Heritage Centre (2005b, Article 7) using the term 'historic urban landscape', defined historic urban centre as:

“Ensembles of any group of buildings, structures and open spaces, in their and ecological context, including archaeological and paleontological sites, constituting human settlements in an urban environment over a relevant period of time, the cohesion and value of which are recognized from the archaeological, architectural, prehistoric, historic, scientific, aesthetic, socio-cultural or ecological point of view. This landscape has shaped modern society and has great value for our understanding of how we live today”.

Among three categories of cultural landscapes adopted by the World Heritage Committee in their operational guidelines 1992, historic urban landscape falls into the category 'a continuing cultural landscape' and it is a living museum of permanence. Definition of World Heritage Committee is cited by Rössler (2000) as:

“A continuing cultural landscape is one which retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress. At the same time it exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution overtime”.

Historic Urban Landscape Conservation is one of the most difficult areas of cultural heritage conservation and awareness of all stakeholders and community participation is so important. Concerning with conservation of historic urban areas, Hoi An Protocol (UNESCO Beijing 2003,35) addresses that for conservation of historic urban areas ,it is important to form ‘an administrative and decision-making body’ be formed with ‘local government, business and community representation with professional conservation and planning expertise’.

This paper highlights differences in heritage elements in physical setting and the spiritual view in conservation of historic centre from developing Asian country from that of developed European country. However, both are in need of stringent control over contemporary architecture in historic urban landscape. What should be the conservation solution in the context of developing countries in general and Yangon CBD in particular to maintain the values of historic urban centre and authentic role of continuing cultural landscapes?

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is built on qualitative data of international conservation charters, conventions, conferences, guidelines, critical academic papers and publications relating to conservation of historic urban landscape and supported by data obtained from case study analysis and questionnaire surveys.

For the context of Vienna and Yangon, research comprised gathering and processing data from three main sources: (1) contacting government officials and forwarding standardised questionnaires ; (2) gathering data from relevant literature, reports and documents of various organizations and agencies on conservation and planning issues; (3) observing conservation and related planning processes.

## **3. TWO HISTORIC CORES: HISTORIC CENTRE ON WORLD HERITAGE LIST FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRY AND HISTORIC CORE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRY**

### **3.1 Evolution of Vienna Historic Center**

The World Heritage area of Vienna Historic Centre which was nominated in 2001 is just the First District within Ringstrasse( Figure 1) , plus a few areas besides (like the Belvedere Palace area).The area designated comprises around 3.7km<sup>2</sup> core zone and 4.6km<sup>2</sup> buffer zone. It gives an overview of its history, from the earliest beginnings as a Celtic and Roman settlement and the greatest glory, the Baroque as the capital of a huge empire, and the 19th century, when the Ringstrasse plan followed by the construction of the Parliament Building, City Hall, the Vienna University, the Opera, and the Art history and Natural History Museums.

Rotenberg (1995,34) expressed the land use at that time of old city , now Vienna Historic Centre, around 1500 as ‘the commercial centre and residential quarter for the nobility and patricians’. Since that time there was height control for buildings and he mentioned as ‘tallest buildings, with most houses raised to three stories’. He pointed out Vienna city centre was once the densest residential area within the settlement. Concerning with land use control ,he expressed as ‘Inside its wall there were no stables, smoky workshops, warehouses , or commercial gardens to be found’.

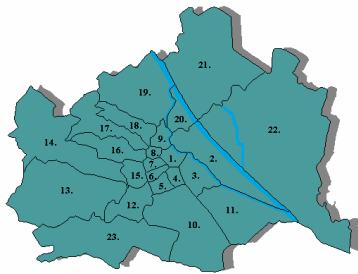


Figure 1. Map of Vienna

Source:[www.your-friend.info/vienna/](http://www.your-friend.info/vienna/)



Figure 2. Vienna Historic Centre

Source:[http://www.touristnet.co.at/map\\_e.htm](http://www.touristnet.co.at/map_e.htm)

The foundation period (between 1840 and end of World War I) refers to the most intense period of building in the city’s history. One of the major projects of the period was erecting the complex known as Ringstrasse in the place of the fortifications and Glacis. Today this street is the boundary line of Vienna Historic Centre (Figure 2). Rudolf Schicker, Executive City Councillor for Urban Development, Traffic and Transport, Vienna (Austria), stated that ‘9 % of the Viennese building stock — have been designated protection zones as early as in 1972’. He again pointed out that ‘traffic in the city centre was and is reduced by continuously improving public transport, setting up pedestrian zones and introducing parking space management using short-term parking zones’ (City of Vienna 2005,56). Improvement of traffic is a planning related issue for conservation which should be the initial step for conserving the historic city centres of developing countries.

### 3.2 Evolution of Yangon Central Business District (CBD)

Present day Yangon CBD area is on the site of Dagon village which is south of Kyauk Lagon Pagoda (present site of Shwedagon Pagoda which is the most significant landmark in Yangon) since 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In 1755, Myanmar King Alaungphaya, upgraded Dagon into a new town and renamed it to Yangon. At that time, urban settlement Yangon was planned and built around Sule Pagoda, the hub of present day Yangon CBD. During his long stay in Yangon, King Thawaddy founded second Yangon by building a royal palace but a little northwards to that of Alaungphaya. In 1853, the town plan of new colonial capital of Yangon was presented by Lieutenant A. Fraser, a Bengal Engineer, and it was the forming of the spatial configuration of present day Yangon CBD. Fraser’s plan, adopted the Sule pagoda as the center of the town, so that the town was thus moved westwards as compared with Alaungphaya’s Yangon. Sule Pagoda road, 200 feet wide, was formed running northwards from the River, with the Pagoda in its middle and intersect with Mahabandola Road which is running east and west. There are other main and small roads running east and west. All north-south roads are perpendicular to the Strand road along the river bank, thus forming chess-board pattern.

Administrative boundary of present day Yangon CBD encompasses seven townships, Latha, Lanmadaw, Kyauktada, Pabedan, Botataung, Pazuntaung and Seiken. In the interim report for Yangon Strategic Development Plan (2005) , CBD townships are mentioned as Inner City Area (ICA). A recommendation there is –to establish a proper Central Business District and to be so some urban character of these areas should be planned. Therefore, there may be a need to expand the present CBD (Central Business District) to accommodate new Private Office and Commercial Complexes and relieve development pressure on the Conservation Zone. It is the idea to allocate the business forces to the area quite a distance from historic zone. The expanded CBD proposed by the Strategic Development Plan would involve in addition to seven townships, parts of the townships of Ahlone, Dagon and Mingalar-Taung-Nyut bounded by the Inner Ring Road. The new CBD area will cover an area of 6.71 sq.miles(17.4 km<sup>2</sup>) ( Figure 3).



*Figure 3. Map of Yangon*

Source : <http://myanmartravelinformation.com/mti-map/images/large-yangon1.jpg>

As the commercial hub of the present day Yangon, this area has highest population density, and highest land values. Most of the buildings can be found in the CBD area, mainly in some parts of Kyauktada Township which can be called as an Historic Urban Site or Heritage Group (Figure 4).The historic urban sites and elements of Yangon CBD can be classified into buildings of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century such as administrative, judicial and education buildings, and trading facilities such as markets, warehouses and ports , Buddhist, Chinese and Hindu Temples, Mosques and Traditional semi-commercial shop-houses and residences of various social classes and ethnic groups such as Bhamas, Indians, Chinese, etc who settled there since CBD was established. According to Maw Oo Hock (2006),

“The essence of planning pattern laid in a well planned center with most important administrative buildings near Sule pagoda, commercial and social buildings surround them and mixed residential and ethnic buildings further to the east west and north. The southern boundary was the river port. The most remarkable characteristics of colonial style can still be observed in the religious churches and central administrative buildings around Sule Pagoda of Yangon”.



*Figure 4 Historic Core of Yangon (CBD), Yangon in 1853 on present day CBD Map  
Source : Su Su (2006)*

### 3.3 Universal Needs and Similarities

The image of every historic urban centres has a close relationship with the local culture and identity. It is a reflection of past , present and future. Imon (2006) noted the qualities of historic urban centres from ICOMOS (1975, 1987, 2003) and UNESCO World Heritage Centre (1972, 2005a, 2005b) documents as historic urban centres provide us the historic evidence of our cultural wealth and diversity, the consciousness of our common history and common future and they are the most direct visual link to our roots which helps us establish our identity, sources of knowledge about history and cultural and technological excellence, containers of traditional socio-cultural practices that have passed the test of time and finally they manifest humankind's response to the physical and social environment.

Whether it is the historic centre on the World Heritage List or not, the similar need is to fulfill every citizen's need. The European Landscape Convention highlights the awareness of the importance of cultural landscapes including historic urban landscape. The Landscape convention champions the principle that governments should recognize 'every citizen's need to establish a tangible and feeling relationship with the land , derive physical and spiritual benefit from this relationship'( Priore 2005, 31 cited in Nicolson 2005, 6). This applies not only to the famous landscapes of the world ,such as those inscribed on the World Heritage List, but also to the humble, everyday landscapes that surround us (Nicolson 2005, 6). The historic centres are classified into four categories in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005a), and Yangon CBD and Historic Centre of Vienna both fall into third category 'Historic centres enclosed within modern cities that cover exactly the same area as ancient towns'. However, globally, most historic urban centres are actually today historic districts within larger modern cities (Serageldin 1996, 69 cited in Imon 2006, 25).

In terms of geographical location, both cities were established beside the rivers but Vienna historic centre is quite a distance away from the River Danube now where Yangon CBD is nearer. According to Tafari (2006), during the 1860s, The many branches of the Danube were removed, leaving a branch near the central city and named Donaukanal (Danube Canal) and a new straight canal was created away from the central city. Yangon is situated at the place where Pun Hlaing River and Pazyntaung Creek flow into the sea. The development over time of both cities were in fan shapes to the opposite directions leaving the rivers and the historic core areas. However, partly to counter the development pressure on historic centre, Vienna has established new economic hub at the opposite side of the Danube which is not so far

from the city centre. Therefore, there must be local development and important questions to answer are where and how this should take place.

Another significant similarity of the two cities is that densities driven by market prices are highest in both city centres and much lower in the periphery. The following statement from Alain Bertaud, who is a World Bank Consultant (France) highlighted this case by stating 'the spatial pattern of land prices generated by markets is important for conservation' and mostly, 'the location of historic centres coincides with the centre of gravity of cities' and that is why 'the pressure generated by land markets to transform land use is highest precisely where conservation is needed. At the same time, high land prices and high rents may generate the tax revenues required to maintain historic buildings'(City of Vienna 2005, 24). There by, giving the right role to public participation and public administration becomes very important. The following hypotheses of architect and urban planner Silvio Mendes-Zancheti from University of Recife (Brazil) pointed out that conservation integrates into local development 'only if the set of values that regulates the urban management process is able to incorporate heritage values into development'. He again stated the means to achieve this are 'widening the institutional spaces for public participation and the existence of a social process that guarantees the non-adherence of the public administration to projects involving the most powerful economic actors in the local development policy arena' ( City of Vienna 2005, 26).

Many international charters including the Washington Charter refers to development over time. As there is physical degradation because of the impact of urban development, the conservation of these areas will include their 'development and harmonious adaption to contemporary life' (UNESCO 1987).

#### **4. DIFFERENCE IN NATURE OF URBAN HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION CONCEPTS IN ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THAT IN EUROPE**

Rowney (2004, 219) pointed out that the UNESCO Recommendation, with reference to the danger of producing a uniform environment throughout the world, refers to the preservation of historic areas as making 'an outstanding contribution to maintaining and developing the cultural and social values of each nation. This can contribute to the architectural enrichment of the cultural heritage of the world' (UNESCO 1976). It is a strong point to accept that there will be difference between nature of heritage and conservation concepts in the countries' context. At emphasis on the material fabric, the intangible value of the traditional way of life of local community may be faded away. The following statement from the Lebanon architect Jade Tabet articulates this approach of conservation combined with cultural heritage commitment:

"A general enthusiasm for the cultural heritage often results in old city centres becoming mere sites of recreation and mass tourism, which in turn destroys traditional activities and creates a kind of urban Disneyland". (City of Vienna 2005, 22)

For city centre from developing country like Yangon, there is less possibility to be a mere sites of recreation as the land value is still very high being one and only economic hub of the city and transportation is not efficient enough to persuade the rich families living in downtown area to move away from it. Taylor (2004) states that 'it may be that tourism can be a powerful force in maintaining traditional places in Asian cities

and countryside' he pointed out that lifestyle, traditions and fabric are supported by tourist spending. He again suggested Asian people to think locally while as well as being aware of global trends and practice. The elements of the urban area which need to be the focus on conservation include streets, squares, blocks and buildings as well as the spaces around and between them and it is interesting to investigate how they structure space and make it authentic. The structure of space in an Asian urban setting is hierarchical: streets are ritual paths, squares are sacred of cultural places (UNESCO Beijing 2003,35).

For Yangon CBD, Maw Oo Hock (2006) attempts to find means in her paper to utilize the strength of the heritage conservation areas and elements as catalysts in historic urban landscape to enhance economic growth and maintain the uniqueness of the past, as the base of enforcing better future without neglecting the needs of modern living. But for Yangon's case, it is necessary to pose the question "Whose heritage are we conserving"? It is sometimes controversial to determine the role of the residues of colonialism play in everyday urban landscape. However, these buildings, streets and squares can tell us very well about the long history of the nation through the successive layers of buildings and ensembles. There are intangible values that embedded in them. Taylor (2004) asked the same question :

"So in Cultural Heritage Management the key issue is whose culture are we presenting and why? Also fundamental to the issue in Asia, and with consequences on options for charters and conventions, is the manner in which most Asian cultures have a spiritual view of what is culturally valuable from the past: the past lives on in memory of people, of events and of places through time rather than concentrating on the material fabric which can change or be".

It is very interesting to consider how the social pluralism of many ethnic groups of Yangon CBD can be reflected and equitably represented in the image of urban landscapes. For that , it is definitely necessary to look back at how successfully current heritage policies reflect the cultural, ethnic and religious diversities of Asia as well as whether UNESCO conventions on 'intangible heritage' promote pluralism .It now becomes a key question whether heritage frameworks conceived within the cultural traditions of 'Western' modernity are valid for Asia today. Some of the Asian historic urban centres are densely populated areas and it is important to be considered the rights of the communities living inside historic landscapes regarding development and 'modernization' if the areas are to be conserved authentically. Taylor ( 2004) highlighted the Asian approach of conservation as:

"Wei and Aass set out the Asian approach in a provocative paper some years ago (1980) where time is seamless and the cumulative spiritual and physical contributions of various generations are valued. Accretions of change and repair to fabric are accepted as the norm without detracting from the spirit of the place. From this perspective there are ramifications for the preparation of charters and principles for cultural heritage conservation and management relevant to Asian cultures".

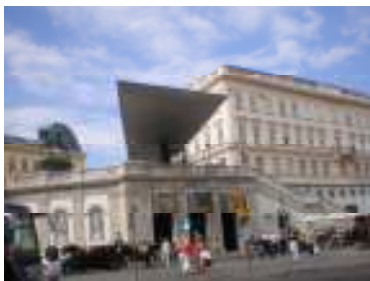
#### 4.1 Effectiveness of Current Legislation and Institutional Framework for Conservation of Historic Centre of Vienna

Austria had ratified the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1993 (Federal Gazette No.60/1993).

There is a need of additional legal power in the case of Austria as well. Conservation of monuments is the responsibility of the Federal administration with Monument Protection Act enacted in 1923 (amended till 1999). Nature conservation for parks and gardens, building regulations and development control is under the Federal provinces. According to the Monument Protection Act, protection of ensembles is concerned overlapping with townscape care under the provincial authority. The fact is highlighted by the Neuwirth (2006):

“World Heritage Sites may come under monument protection both as individual objects and ensembles; under the Austrian system of competences, the protection of open spaces in historic city centres, of the surroundings of monuments and even more, of the cultural landscape comes under provincial legislation.....The legislative situation described above clearly shows that the World Heritage Sites need to be protected by an approach that integrates all planning instruments. But this protection is lacking in as much as the various planning instruments corresponding to the legal provisions have not yet been co-ordinated in Management Plans for World Heritage Site protection’.

The Municipality of the City of Vienna carefully records the architectural, archeological and historic heritage with a computerized database. A scientific analysis for defining and mapping the famous viewpoints such as that of “Canaletto’ view of the inner city from the Belvedere, panoramas and identification points has been undertaken. The construction of high-rise buildings can only be implemented once they have been checked for compatibility with the historic cityscape. However, in Vienna as in most other historic cities, some of the new buildings and attic conversion are the subject of very controversial discussions, for example the entrance to the Albertina Museum (Figure 3) and Haas-Haus (Figure 4).



*Figure 3. Entrance to Albertina Museum*



*Figure 4. Haas-Haus*

*Source : Field Survey (2008)*

The following statement from Michael Turner from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem (Israel) criticized insufficient Public Participation even in Vienna as :

“A platform of Viennese residents’ committees also criticized changes of the historic cityscape and insufficient public participation in decision-making processes. There are different perspectives and interests of residents, tourists, investors, etc., that have to be considered when dealing with the issues of preservation and contemporary architecture”(City of Vienna 2005 , 44).

Neuwirth(2006) stated that typical phenomena to be considered in the learning process for both UNESCO and Austria should include an immediate need that Historic Centres (which includes that of Vienna) require to examine the city centre management



plan with a conservation policy or program which can coordinate all the planning instruments after fine-tuning them and also the boundaries of core and buffer zones in accordance with the Operational Guidelines of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, to inform administrative and political decision makers of importance of World Heritage Sites, to develop suitable inventory of cultural landscape elements worthy of protection along with assessment of changes introduced, and finally development and implementation of suitable master concepts and safeguarding by Management Plan for the conservation and sustainable development of Historic Centres (which includes that of Vienna).

#### 4.2 Effectiveness of Current Legislation and Institutional Framework for Conservation of Historic Centre of Yangon ( Yangon CBD)

According to Messeri (2007), in 1886 when Myanmar was officially annexed to the British Empire of India, Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, promoted archaeological studies and the preservation of relics. Following a visit paid to Myanmar (1901), the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1904) was approved, after which it was decided to proceed with a compilation of the 'protected monuments' of historical, archaeological and/or artistic interest, which were placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Archaeology in Burma(Myanmar). In 1916 about five hundred monuments came to be included in the list .In 1998, Legislation at the National Level for Heritage Conservation, the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions law had been enacted. Maw Oo Hock (2006) pointed out that ' at present, the law covers only ancient sites leaving out the other categories of heritage sites'. Another piece of legislation existing at the Local level related to the conservation of Historic Urban Landscape is the Yangon Municipal By-Law. It consists of height control restricting the number of storeys in two designated areas that around Shwedagon Pagoda and Shwephonepwint Pagoda. However, Shwedagon Pagoda is beyond the boundary of Yangon CBD. For this case, Maw Oo Hock (2006) pointed out that :

“However, it is desirable to improve the area designations by taking into consideration the visual lines from important approaches to minimize possible disturbances and maintain important vistas. On the other hand it is desirable to encourage more stringent and unbiased enforcement of the municipal by-law”.

As well as the height control of the buildings, it is important to consider other aspects of planning thoroughly. For the historic buildings in Yangon , including those in Yangon CBD, Yangon Heritage Building List for conservation was issued in 1996. Altogether one hundred and eighty nine buildings were included in the list. Since then, more stringent control measures have been undertaken in renovation and restoration of the buildings in the list. However, there is a need to control the surroundings of these listed buildings with conservation management plan as well so that Yangon CBD maintain its beautiful urban landscape in space as well as the link to the buildings themselves. However, there are many controversial new developments in Yangon CBD as well. One particular extreme example is the construction of gigantic skyscrapers that overlook and constitute an eyesore to the area surrounding one of the most important monuments of the country, the Sule Pagoda in Yangon CBD (Messeri 2007) (Figure 5).



*Figure 5. Sule Pagoda and new development*  
*Source :Field Survey (2008)*

In Yangon CBD area, the conflicts occur because of the original mixed land use pattern and the land values in the city center area. Yangon, like other South East Asian countries, has no defined zone for specific function. In every block in existing CBD boundaries, there are religious buildings such as temples, mosque, and damathalas. However at present there is no legal provision or clear administrative setup to address conservation issues in Yangon CBD.

#### 4.3 Reviewing International Charters for Yangon Context

Both the Venice Charter(1964) and the Burra Charter(1999), being the most recognized conservation instruments, are pitched at maintaining the physical fabric though the Burra Charter highlights intangible qualities of heritage as well. The Washington Charter (1987) for conservation of historic towns and urban areas also not so much addresses on cultural issues and more on material nature and physical fabric. Rowney (2004,25) pointed out that the Resolutions of Bruges: Principles governing the Rehabilitation of Historic Towns (1975) recognizes the social and cultural factors that make up a town's character, and calls for their safeguarding , not only for their cultural and aesthetic appeal but particularly for their social function, as the natural meeting place of the urban community. There was also a need for concluding discussion of the role of Asian culture and social economic conditions. Hoi An Protocol fills this gap. Hoi An Protocol (UNESCO Beijing 2003, 33) classified the threats to the preservation of Historic Urban Areas of Asian cities such as the loss of historic structures and replacement with new buildings as a result of economic pressures, the slow decay of structural fabric due to lack of maintenance, a steady onslaught of pollution, damage from vibration and settlement, changes in water levels and moisture etc. in the urban environment, Heavy, uncontrolled traffic and polluting vehicles within and around historic urban areas and finally the loss of traditional occupations and of the traditional economic –residential mix of the community.

As there are inadequacies in the international and national charters as well as necessities to revise UNESCO Recommendation, UNESCO has been invited to study the possibility for formulating a new recommendation to complement and update the existing ones on the subject of historic urban landscapes with special reference to the contextualization of contemporary architecture which should be submitted, at a future date, to the General Conference of UNESCO (City of Vienna 2005, 72) .The World Heritage Centre accepted the extended invitation and embarked on an effort to formulate the new recommendation by 2009 (Firestone and Goodchild 2006).A critical review of the 1976 UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and

Contemporary Role of Historic Areas emphasized that a revised Recommendation was needed to focus on the specific nature and needs of cities as living heritage (UNESCO Executive Board 2008).

The main conclusions of the regional expert meetings emphasized the importance of a number of aspects that have profoundly changed the discipline and practice of urban heritage conservation, such as:

- the increasing importance attributed to the concept of historic urban landscape, as a stratification of previous and current urban dynamics, with an interplay between the natural and built environment;
- the greater role taken by contemporary architecture in historic areas, and the issue of sensitivity of new architecture to context;
- the economics and changing role of cities, with an emphasis on non-local processes such as tourism and urban development, with outside actors of change;
- the issues of “authenticity” and “integrity” in relation to living historic cities;
- the meaning and the use of “buffer zones” in relation to historic urban landscapes;
- the “intangible” values associated with urban historic areas(UNESCO Executive Board 2008)

After the UNESCO had formulated the new Recommendation, Asian countries may concentrate more again towards having their own documents to address regionally meaningful management of Asian historic urban landscape as the second third and fourth of the threats in urban areas in Asia ‘decay of structural fabric’, ‘pollution problems’ and ‘traffic problems’ are different kinds of threats from that of developed European countries.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS FOR INTEGRATING THE HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE CONCEPT INTO YANGON CBD PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

According to the responses of the questionnaire surveys recently sent to officials from Yangon City Development Committee(YCDC), Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development (DHSHD) in Yangon, it can be clearly seen that the conservation of historic urban landscape concept is rarely integrated into country’s existing planning and conservation legislation and also international definitions and categories of historic urban landscape have not been clearly applied in the legislation. The conservation legislation should take into account the needs and sense of identity of local people in addition to protect the structure of the urban fabric if it is prepared to enact. Moreover, conservation of historic urban landscape has some weakness due to more priority to financial and other economic reasons. YCDC ,DHSHD and Department of Archeology are involved in the conservation of historic landscape but there is no clear hierarchical structure at the federal and local levels. DHSHD has done the studies on the areas around Shwedagon and Sule Pagodas and impacts of planning on such areas and visual observation land use survey of the several parts of the historic city center. The response to the questionnaire also suggest that the major hindrances or obstructions in conserving the historic centre are to be found in the absence of clear conservation policies, legislation and practice. As the protection of the surroundings of a monument is almost impossible for the Listed Buildings in CBD, at present there is no strong power of legal control on conservation of historic urban landscape of Historic CBD. Finally, all the respondents strongly recommend that there is an urgent need for systematic development of conservation legislation and guidelines that are sustainable

and viable as well as for awareness building of public and the concerned people about the importance of conservation of the historic CBD.

Summary of remarks from the respondents, reviewing reports and documents of various organizations and observing conservation and related planning processes lead to the recommendation on important factors to be considered in formulating the specific policies, strategies and guidelines for conservation of Yangon CBD. They are:

- Proper conservation management through planning and conservation legislation and guidelines followed by hierarchical institutional arrangements with clear duties and responsibilities ;
- Systematic documentation of heritage buildings, ensembles, structures and open spaces and comprehensive survey on architectural, social, economic, cultural and technical data;
- To find out qualities which characterize Asian countries' urban Tradition for authentic preservation;
- Systematic control of the views, vistas and skyline and strengthen sense of identity;
- Proper studies on movement patterns, improvement of transportation system and development of pedestrian zones in the major historic core.
- Land use, development control and systematic change of use control to ease the development pressure of heavy CBD and ensure compatibility of new development with surrounding historic urban landscape;
- To undergo Cultural Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment for any major infrastructure or development project;
- To promote stakeholders and public awareness and their involvement in decision making;
- Recognition of social-cultural diversity and displaying all cultural assets of all ethnic groups of the area.
- Promote managed tourism from conservation of urban heritage aspects
- Thorough Assessment of the dangers to the heritage site for disaster prevention and preparedness and to draw up detailed rescue and disaster-response plans;

## 6. CONCLUSION

Only by balancing and integrating the objectives of fulfilling the needs of local community and planning heritage buildings to play as catalysts for livelihood of CBD, the authentic role of historic urban landscape can be maintained. Awareness of differences in nature of urban heritage and spiritual views of people from the cities are the upmost important in application of international recommendations and charters to the local context. Thereby, authentic qualities of Yangon CBD's historic urban landscape can be meaningfully conserved.

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