ICC-Angkor meeting this month

The International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC-Angkor), co-chaired by Japan and France, will meet on January 24 to discuss ongoing preservation efforts of the Angkor Archaeological Park as well as the impending ticket price hike, which is expected to come into effect next month.

The two-day meeting will consist of a plenary session, dedicated to the discussion of policy and development projects, as well as a technical session, which will see dozens of experts gathered to find solutions for issues plaguing the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

“This meeting will be dedicated to the follow up of recommendations concerning conservation, restoration and sustainable development, adopted in 2016, to the adoption of new recommendations on the basis of experts’ reports and to discussions about next steps to undertake regarding the general development of Angkor on a broad range of issues: ticketing, cooperation between international teams and Cambodian authorities and bodies,” French Ambassador to Cambodia Jean-Claude Poinboeuf and Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia Hidehisa Horinouchi jointly said during an interview with Khmer Times on Wednesday.

After this month’s meeting, another technical session will be held in June to serve as a follow-up to the recommendations adopted at January’s meeting in a bid to “pursue a better coordination mechanism on current agenda items.”

Following last year’s two-day ICC-Angkor meeting in June, Apsara Authority spokesperson Long Kosal said the government was looking for more assistance from UNESCO, which is in charge of the committee, for the preservation of Angkor Wat after experts warned that its stonework needed “additional care.”

“Deputy Prime Minister Sok An requested that experts from UNESCO share modern technical ideas, training and their experiences with Apsara officials in order to improve human resources and protect and preserve the Angkor archaeological site,” local media quoted Mr. Kosal as saying.

Mr. Horinouchi assured the public that the ICC-Angkor was committed to the continuous conservation and preservation of the iconic temple complex.

“As a co-chair of ICC-Angkor, we will continue to work with the Cambodian government and relevant partners to address challenges affecting its sustainability and look for the right direction for the future,” he said.

Mr. Poinboeuf expressed the same commitment, adding that the committee today faces a unique set of challenges in the face of rapid economic development.
“When the ICC-Angkor was created back in 1993, the main priority was to preserve a site that had suffered from decades of war and neglect. Today, in a peaceful environment and in the context of a fast-developing economy, Angkor is seen as a major attraction worldwide,” he said.

“This brings new challenges that the ICC-Angkor is in a unique position to tackle since all stakeholders are part of the discussions on the current state and future of the site.”