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SECOND PROTOCOL TO THE HAGUE CONVENTION OF 1954 FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY IN THE EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY IN THE EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT

Eighth meeting
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
18 to 19 December 2013

Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda:

**Report on the use of financial assistance granted to Mali from the Fund for the
Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict**

Introduction

1. On an ad hoc basis, a sum of 40,500 USD was granted as emergency assistance to Mali in December 2012 with the main goals of protecting cultural property in the northern regions of Mali and drawing an assessment of the situation.
2. Following the granting of this assistance, two contracts have been concluded by UNESCO, first with the National Museum of Mali in order to adequately secure the museum and secondly with the National Directorate for Cultural Heritage (*Direction nationale du patrimoine culturel*, hereinafter DNPC) to identify the objects of the regional and local museums of Gao, Timbuktu and Djenné; to sort out and package objects to be transported to the National Museum of Mali and to draw an assessment of the situation at the archaeological sites of those areas.
3. This assistance was granted prior to the French military intervention in January 2013, thus certain activities could not be carried out, and the interventions had to be reoriented according to the evolution of the situation in the country. In particular, the exfiltration of objects could not be carried out as planned and had to be replaced by *in situ* protection.
4. Due to the unpredictable nature of the evolution of the situation, the Secretariat proceeded with an extension of the duration of both contracts in order to allow for the implementation and finalization of activities.
5. The National Museum of Mali and the DNPC have regularly informed the Secretariat about the progress of activities, and reports were submitted upon their completion. The main goal of the assistance was achieved despite the necessary reorientations as a result of the evolution of the situation and the difficulties posed. The DNPC's report also includes recommendations for further actions to take in each of the visited sites, effectively rendering this assistance part of a wider plan for protecting Mali's cultural heritage. The report suggests emergency measures of preservation, where appropriate, and proposals of strategies for the reinforcement of securing the collections and archaeological sites.

Report on the activities carried out

6. The National Museum of Mali proceeded as planned in the securing of the buildings and collections, the fear being that the museum would be vulnerable to the attack by rebels. Thus, the door of the archaeological reserve, the access to the principal reserve and the principal door to the permanent exhibition halls were reinforced. In the same vein, the emergency exits of the exhibition halls were also secured. These projects, which allowed for the prevention and reduction of risks, comprised the first phase of a wider plan for the reinforcement of the museum's security. Threats to the security of heritage (risks of attack, social and political conflicts) cannot be excluded.
7. Due to the beginning of the military intervention in January 2013, the DNPC had to stop the exfiltration operations for cultural objects coming from Gao. As access to the areas of Timbuktu and Gao was impossible, the activities first focused on the assessment of the situation in the region of Djenné, situated farther south, where the situation was more stable.

1. Old Towns of Djenné

8. A DNPC mission was undertaken in February 2013 to assess the situation of the **archeological sites of the Old Towns of Djenné**. Traces of looting were reported.

Actions to take:

For the archaeological sites at Kaniana and Tonomba:

- Carry out rescue excavations

For the archaeological sites at Djenné-Djeno and Hambarkétolo:

- Proceed with preservation actions and reinforce existing means of preservation;

- Close both sites to control their access and avoid damage caused by the presence of animals and people;
- Make the sites' boundaries more readable while proceeding with an adequate boundary;
- Raise the awareness of the local population on the subject of the importance of classified sites;
- Continue the renewal and strengthening of interpretation facilities and signs to help visitors understand the sites.

For unclassified sites:

- Inform and raise the awareness of local representatives on the importance of archaeological sites so that they implement preservation and improvement actions in their programmes of economic, social and cultural development;
- Conduct a large awareness-raising campaign among the population on the importance of the protection of sites and the people's responsibility in this regard.

2. Dogon Region

9. In February 2013, a mission made an evaluation of the situation of the **community museums of Nombori, Enndé and Soroly and of the cultural bank of Dimbal.**

a) Buildings

10. All the buildings are in good condition, except the Soroly museum, where part of the structure has collapsed and the walls are cracked due to the lack of maintenance.

b) Collections

11. The museum and cultural bank collections (several hundred objects in total) did not suffer any damage. In prevention of potential destruction or theft, some owners of objects have moved certain objects to secret shelters. Moreover, a portion of the objects of the Dimbal cultural bank has been secured in a room specially arranged for this purpose.

c) Difficulties in the field

12. The mission noticed an increase of trafficking and selling off of objects due to the conflict and the catastrophic decrease in tourism brought about by the conflict. The number of visitors to the museums has also plummeted. To make matters worse, there are problems of infrastructure on the edges of the cultural bank of Dimbal, in addition to financial problems (for instance, the mayor has failed to ensure the salary of the guard due to lack of funds).

Actions to take:

- Strengthen the capacity of the managers of the museums and cultural bank;
- Bolster museum collections through the acquisition of new collections;
- Support the renewal of aging exhibitions.

3. Gao Region

13. As soon as the situation allowed for it in March 2013, an evaluation mission went to Gao. The mission could not, however, proceed with an evaluation of the Gao Saneye archaeological site, due to the safety measures implemented by armed forces around the city.

a) Sahel Museum

14. The mission conducted an evaluation of the state of preservation of the collections and of the buildings of the Sahel Museum, which is home to more than 1,500 objects.

i) Buildings

15. The Sahel Museum is currently composed of two different buildings: an old building, which used to host all the collections until the beginning of the conflict, and a new building, which was supposed to be inaugurated at the time the conflict erupted.
16. The old building has serious permeability problems, which have been aggravated by the lack of maintenance during the conflict. It was noted that the locks of doors and windows are defective.
17. The new building was used as headquarters by the rebels. It is in a satisfactory state of preservation, with only the destruction of a wooden door and of four windows having been noted. The building also suffered damages from the intervention of Malian and French armed forces to free Gao, with fifteen doors having been forced open to oust the rebels from the building. Still, it should be noted that the armed forces took care to lock the doors afterward. To strengthen security, the mission fixed chains and locks to ensure the closure of the two massive entry doors. Every lock in the building has been replaced and the offices' windows have been reinforced. The lighting system was also restored.

ii) Collections

18. The mission noticed that since the closing of the museum because of the conflict, no looting, theft or vandalism has been committed. Indeed, the museum staff had established security measures, and some objects were packed and moved to safety with neighboring families. However, the objects remaining in the exhibition rooms and storage room have seriously suffered from heat, insects and dust resulting from sand winds, but their general condition is nonetheless rather good. The mission treated objects with insecticides and cleaned them. The work was made difficult due to power outages and thus a large part of the work was accomplished during the night when the power was restored.
19. The mission also organized *in situ* storage of objects in better conditions of safety and preservation. After being treated and cleaned, the most sensitive objects were packed. After the departure of the mission, the removal of dust and packing were carried on by the museum keeper and his staff.
20. The mission noticed that the objects secured at the inhabitants' homes were in a much better state of preservation when they were protected in trunks or packed in protective bags.

Actions to take:

- Continue the pursuit of works of cleaning and treatment of the museum's collections;
- As soon as conditions allow, transport the equipment acquired for the treatment, cleaning, and digitization of information about the objects.

b) The Tomb of Askia

21. Although not directly affected by rebels, the Tomb of Askia has sustained damages and risks collapsing due to a lack of maintenance, as noted by the mission. Indeed, the occupation of Gao by the rebels from March 2012 to February 2013 prevented the maintenance staff of the Ministry of Culture from conducting maintenance, protection and restoration work on the site.
22. After the over-wintering period (the rainy season lasts from June to September/October), the roughcasting of the pyramidal tower and of the mosques could not be done. A pillar and part of the roof have been temporarily restored, but the risks of collapsing remain critical.

Actions to take:

- Organize interdisciplinary expert missions for the Tomb of Askia;
- Restoration and rehabilitation of the Tomb.

c) Kankou Moussa mosque site

23. During the visit to the Kankou Moussa mosque site, the mission noticed that the only damage directly caused by the rebels was the blackening of one of the door panels of a building used to protect stone structures. Also, schist blocks were displaced and broken as rebels thought they could find a tomb underneath. Moreover, several parts of the site were seriously damaged by wind and torrential rain, and most of the structures are filled with earth and sand because of erosion and sandstorms. During the last rainy season, the enclosing wall was severely damaged. Part of the building's roof, built to protect the stone structures of the site, has collapsed, and pieces of sheet metal have been carried away by the wind.

Actions to take:

- Restore the exhumed remains;
- Clean the inside of the structures that have already been exposed over the course of various excavations;
- Restore and cover excavated structures;
- Restore the building that serves as a shelter to the exposed structures to the north of the site;
- Build rainwater evacuation tanks.

4. Douentza

24. On the way back from Gao, the mission stopped at Douentza to assess the situation of the cultural bank of Fombori. All throughout the occupation of the northern region, the cultural bank remained closed. The collections had been moved to safety but have now been brought back. They have been spared from theft, looting and destruction. Except for the economic consequences of closing the cultural bank for the population, there is no damage. The collections are now back and microcredit activities have resumed. The museum part of the cultural bank could reopen soon.

5. Sikasso

25. In April 2013, a mission assessed the state of preservation of the building and of the collections of the Museum of Sikasso, comprised of 138 objects, 34 of which belong to the Museum of Sikasso and 104 others which are on loan from the National Museum and the Centre of Research for the Sénoufo Culture.

a) The building

26. A certain number of problems have been identified. At the time of the mission, the closures of doors and the emergency exits of the storage room were subject to risks of infiltration by insects, dust and rainwater. The objects were thus exposed to climatic fluctuations and sunrays. The presence of termite mounds also threatened the collection.
27. The other risks noted were, among others, the lack of electricity and equipment against fire and the danger of infestation due to the proximity of a garbage disposal.

b) The collections

28. The collection is of extreme sensitivity as it is composed of organic materials. Most of the objects (104) in the museum hall are in good state of preservation. However, the 34 objects of the storage room (particularly the skins, leather, wood, horns, and calabashes) have been subject to massive infestation by insects.
29. Following the above-drawn conclusion, a plan of emergency action for the treatment and securing of the collections of the Museum of Sikasso was established and partially implemented in a mission which took place from 10 to 14 May 2013. This mission led to the processing of collections and premises (fumigation of infested objects, spraying of premises) and to the reinforcement of the physical capacity of the building (installation of curtains on certain openings, repair of the reserve's gate doors).

c) Emergency intervention mission

30. Following the assessment mission, an emergency intervention mission was sent in May 2013 for the treatment of collections and necessary adjustments.
31. Objects damaged by insects were gathered in a room and protected before the fumigation. All the museum's premises and surroundings were sprayed to get rid of insects.
32. Devices have been installed on the bottom of storage rooms' doors in order to seal them and to minimize the risks of deterioration of the collections engendered by the penetration of insects and dust.
33. In order to minimize the risks of deterioration of the objects due to climatic fluctuations, the reflection of sunlight, the contamination from dust and the infestation of insects, curtains were installed over the openings of the exhibition halls, the storage room and the office of the museum director.
34. Finally, the mission brought a substantial quantity of insect-repellent products to quickly respond to a potential future infestation.

Actions to take:

- After the treatment, reintegrate objects into the storage room;
- Clean and pack into plastic bags objects that are vulnerable to insects;
- Consolidate damaged objects;
- Acquire movable storage for the storage room (shelves, cabinet, foam);
- Acquire cleaning materials (vacuums, brushes, cloths, brushes);
- Organize the storage room;
- Buy and install fire extinguishers in the premises of the museum;
- Establish a regular schedule of inspections and treatment of the collections;
- Assure the cleanliness of the yard and the surroundings of the museum;
- Provide the museum with human resources and provide training in preventive preservation.

6. Timbuktu

35. In May 2013, a mission was able to go to Timbuktu to assess the situation of the premises and the collections of three of the city's museums.

a) Arsène Klobb Museum

36. The Arsène Klobb Museum, also called the Christian Museum, suffered looting and damages.

i) The building

37. The mission noticed that the building's door and windows were missing and that the building is cracked in several places and contains cracks and holes on the walls. Despite these damages, the rest of the building remains in a relatively good state of preservation.

ii) The collections

38. The entirety of the collections, composed of French and Touareg combattants' objects and Christian missionaries' objects, has been damaged by rebels, especially objects of human physical representation, such as figures and models.

b) Municipal Museum

i) The building

39. The building suffered damages due to torrential rain and the occupation of the city by armed groups. Consequently, there is no possibility of undertaking the necessary maintenance and restoration. The southern and eastern walls collapsed and the doors are no longer sealed, thus allowing insects and dust to pass through.

40. Mali's Ministry of Culture instituted a National Committee for the Rehabilitation of Northern Cultural Property, with the mission of elaborating a plan of national action accompanied by sectorial plans of intervention. Within this framework, the DNPC effectuated between May and August 2013 three missions to assess the destruction, incorporating the involvement of national and international experts. The goal of these missions was to proceed with the elaboration of a plan of action, accompanied by an estimate of the costs of rehabilitation/reconstruction of the cultural heritage, including the museums.

ii) The collections

41. The Municipal Museum collections, comprised of 1,623 archaeological pieces representing everyday life in Timbuktu, were not subject to destruction or looting. However, they suffered damages due to the lack of maintenance and adequate preservation: metal rusting, pottery cracking, holes in pieces of clothing, dust and insects, and insufficient exhibition stands of quality.

42. Each of the three missions included preservation experts whose role was to evaluate the efforts toward reconstruction of the buildings and restoration of the collections. At present, the evaluation is still underway.

c) Al Mansour Korey Museum

i) The building

43. The building did not suffer from an attack *per se*, but it has been severely damaged by a lack of maintenance and restoration during the occupation of the city. At the time of the mission, the state of the building was structurally sound but the exterior coating and the accessories are deteriorating at an accelerated pace.

ii) Collections

44. The museum collections, which are comprised of 1,795 pieces of archaeological furniture and everyday objects from Timbuktu, are in a disastrous state, in particular the objects of organic materials.

General constraints concerning the museums of Timbuktu

- The museums' collections have not yet been inventoried, and their state of preservation is disastrous, in particular for objects of organic materials;
- The staff of each museum is limited to two or three people;
- There is a lack of financial resources for the maintenance, preservation and development of the museums.

Actions to take for the three museums:

- Restore the destroyed premises of the museums;
- Install devices on doors and windows that will prevent the penetration of dust and insects;
- Install curtains to prevent the reflection of light;
- Acquire equipment and materials for the storage rooms, exhibition halls and collections and strengthen the professional capacity of museum personnel on the subject of preventive protection.

Conclusions

45. The actions undertaken by Mali, thanks to the emergency financial assistance granted by the Committee in December 2012, allowed for the establishment of a detailed report on the state of preservation of the museum collections, buildings and structures, as well as archaeological sites.

46. In this regard, violations against Mali's cultural heritage have been, to a certain extent, limited by pre-emptive measures taken by curators of museums and archaeological sites (notably *supra* §§18 and 23).
47. However, much work remains to be done in Mali. In fact, to a large extent, the conflict has prevented the carrying out of necessary maintenance for the preservation of cultural heritage. Thus, the development and restoration of archaeological sites in Djenné and Gao and the renovation of museum buildings have yet to be effectuated.
48. Therefore, it is apparent from the technical and financial report submitted by the Malian authorities that they intend to submit a request for financial assistance for enhanced protection for cultural property.
49. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 8.COM 5

The Committee,

1. Having examined document CLT-13/8.COM/CONF.203/5;
2. Recalling Decision 7.COM 1 inviting the Secretariat to prepare for its Eighth Meeting a report on the use of the financial assistance and the implementation of the project, with a view to ensuring appropriate monitoring and evaluation;
3. Takes note with satisfaction the report concerning the activities accomplished by Mali;
4. Thanks Mali for all its efforts taken to ensure the protection of its cultural heritage;
5. Congratulates Mali for its commitment to fulfil its obligations under the grant of financial assistance;
6. Encourages Mali to continue its efforts for the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage.