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191 EX/9

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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

JERUSALEM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 36 C/RESOLUTION 43 AND 190 EX/DECISION 13

SUMMARY

This document is presented pursuant to 190 EX/Decision 13, by which the examination of this item was adjourned to the 191st session of the Executive Board.

The document reports on the implementation of ongoing projects in the Old City of Jerusalem, mainly financed through extrabudgetary contributions.

The Report by the Director-General on the implementation of 36 C/Resolution 43 and 190 EX/Decision 5 related to the Ascent to the Mughrabi Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem is presented in document 191 EX/5.

No decision is proposed.

1. Among the projects identified in the framework of the 2007 Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem, only the one concerning the conservation of the Saint John Prodromos Church has received funding from the Leventis Foundation of Cyprus. However, the funds available have proved insufficient to undertake the overall restoration project, and UNESCO is still seeking additional resources to this end.
2. The agreement for the third phase of the project for the establishment of the Centre for the Restoration of Manuscripts of the Haram al-Sharif funded by Norway was signed by the Director-General and the donor in December 2011. The activity started in September 2011 and is progressing well. Five additional staff members have been recruited and four sessions of courses on conservation and restoration techniques have already been held.
3. Within the framework of the project "Safeguarding, Refurbishment and Revitalization of the Islamic Museum of the Haram al-Sharif and its Collection" funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the premises of the Islamic Museum have been repaired and the necessary equipment has been purchased. The four permanent staff members recruited by the Jordanian authorities are being trained in conservation and museum management. The artefacts are being cleaned and conserved, the electronic and photographic inventory is nearly completed, and a storage room has

been set up. The museologist selected by UNESCO, the Director of the Museum of Islamic Art within the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, has proposed a plan of action for the conception of the museum. The implementation of this plan of action will start as soon as it is approved by the local authorities.

4. At the 36th session of the World Heritage Committee (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, 24 June – 6 July 2012), a report summarizing information received from both the Israeli and the Jordanian authorities regarding the works undertaken in and around the Old City of Jerusalem was presented. By Decision 36 COM 7A.23.I, which was adopted without debate, the World Heritage Committee reiterated its request that a joint UNESCO/ICCROM/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the Old City of Jerusalem be undertaken. It is to be recalled that, to this end, the World Heritage Centre had addressed letters to the Permanent Delegation of Israel to UNESCO on 1 February, 13 April and 27 July 2011 and on 9 February 2012, requesting agreement for the mission and comments on the draft terms of reference for such a mission. To date no response has been received.

5. Following information received from various sources, and in particular from the Permanent Delegations of Jordan and Palestine to UNESCO, letters requesting detailed information, as foreseen in paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, were sent to the Israeli Permanent Delegation to UNESCO on 1 December 2010, 13 April 2011, 6 March 2012 and 5 April 2012. An initial answer dated 12 March 2012 indicated that “the plans [for these projects] are all compatible with the integrity and authenticity of the Old City of Jerusalem as a World Heritage site”. Following an additional request for information sent on 2 August 2012, the Permanent Delegation of Israel to UNESCO responded on 22 August 2012 that “the Israeli authorities have no further information or any reason to add to the most recent Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls State of Conservation Report, sent to the World Heritage Centre in March 2012”. Following additional reports, a letter was addressed to the Permanent Delegation of Israel on 25 January 2013, regarding the construction foreseen on the so-called “Givati parking” just outside the Old City and major infrastructure work entailing archaeological excavations planned to take place between the Damascus Gate and the Western Wall. At the time of the drafting of the present document, the Secretariat had received no response.

6. More recently, on 14 February 2013, letters were received from the Permanent Delegations of Jordan and Palestine concerning construction works at the northwest corner of the Western Wall Plaza. The Secretariat has alerted the Permanent Delegation of Israel on this issue asking for further information thereon.

7. On 25 January 2013, the Director-General received a letter from the Permanent Delegation of Turkey to UNESCO regarding alleged damage to the ancient Ottoman tiles surrounding the “Tomb of David” on Mount Zion, just outside the Old City Walls. On 29 January 2013, the Secretariat addressed a letter to the Israeli authorities requesting information on this matter. On 8 February 2013, the Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO also addressed a letter to the Director-General on this matter.

8. At its 190th session, following a roll-call vote in the Programme and External Relations Commission of 28 votes in favour, 23 votes against and 4 abstentions, the Executive Board adopted 190 EX/Decision 13, by which it adjourned the debate on this item to its 191st session. The draft decision 190 EX/PX/DR.6 submitted by Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates was annexed to this decision.

9. Should additional information become available, the Director-General is prepared to issue an addendum to the present document before the 191st session of the Executive Board, in order to inform the Members of the Executive Board of any relevant recent developments.



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JERUSALEM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 36 C/RESOLUTION 43 AND 190 EX/DECISION 13

ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

This document is an addendum to document 191 EX/9, concerning the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem.

No decision is proposed in the document.

1. Pursuant to document 191 EX/9, the Director-General has decided to issue the present Addendum in order to update the Members of the Executive Board on the matter.
2. Since the drafting of document 191 EX/9, the World Heritage Centre has received two reports in view of the preparation of the documents for the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee (16-27 June 2013, Phnom Penh, Cambodia). The first report was received on 25 February 2013 from the Jordanian authorities and prepared in liaison with the Palestinian authorities. The second report, from the Israeli authorities, was received on 26 February 2013.
3. The report from the Jordanian authorities, received by the World Heritage Centre on 25 February, describes projects undertaken by the Jordanian Waqf and highlights obstructions to the work of the Jordanian Waqf. It provides evidence of the archaeological excavations and tunnels in the Old City of Jerusalem and related impact; it also provides evidence of new constructions affecting the integrity and authenticity of the Old City, as well as of measures that alter the character and features of the latter.
4. With reference to paragraphs 5 and 6 of document 191 EX/9 related to the request from the World Heritage Centre to the Israeli authorities to receive detailed information on the works carried out inside and in the close vicinity of the Old City, the Israeli authorities have reported on 26 February that the Western Wall Plaza master plan has been approved by the local planning committee. The report by the Israeli authorities also stresses that the plan for the Strauss building has also been approved and is awaiting building permits. The same report further mentions that the plan for the "Liba House" will shortly be discussed by the Regional Planning Committee and that the construction of the Western Wall elevator was approved and a building permit filed.

5. Moreover, the report from the Israeli authorities confirms the intention to fully restore the Tifferet Israel synagogue, destroyed in 1948, to its original configuration. It indicated that the scheme was approved by the Regional Planning Committee on 10 December 2012.
6. The World Heritage Centre notes that the information provided is not in compliance with the requirements of paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and is therefore, requesting the Israeli authorities to provide all detailed plans and designs.
7. In addition, the report mentions that work has started in the area where the new Mughrabi Ascent is to be built, including the removal of unstable walls, filling of underground spaces with dirt, stabilizing ancient walls, removal of layers of dirt, and stabilizing dirt cuts.
8. A summary of these two reports shall be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 37th session.
9. During the discussions at the 190th session of the Executive Board, Member States expressed their concern regarding the implementation of decisions by the Executive Board with regard to the joint WHC-ICCROM-ICOMOS mission to the World Heritage site of the Old City of Jerusalem. This same concern was the subject of a meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board convened by the Chairperson on the implementation of UNESCO decisions concerning the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem that took place on 7 and 8 March last. During this meeting, the Members of the Bureau expressed, in particular, their wish to advance the organization of the joint WHC-ICCROM-ICOMOS mission to the World Heritage site of the Old City of Jerusalem which was requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th, 35th and 36th sessions respectively, on which no progress had been achieved so far, and requested the Director-General to deploy her efforts to achieve progress on this matter.
10. The Director-General was requested on 14 March 2013, by letter of the Chairperson, to resume efforts with the concerned parties towards the organization of the joint WHC-ICCROM-ICOMOS mission to the World Heritage site of the Old City of Jerusalem.



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JERUSALEM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 36 C/RESOLUTION 43 AND 190 EX/DECISION 13

ADDENDUM 2

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered document 191 EX/9,
2. Acknowledges the concerned parties commitment to implement the World Heritage Committee resolution 34 COM 7A20 (Brasilia consensus resolution) by sending a joint WHC/ICCROM/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls according to paragraph 11 of the above mentioned resolution as reflected by the Israeli representative's letter of 23 April 2013 to the Director-General;
3. Thanks the Director-General for her efforts and initiatives to lead to an understanding between all concerned parties and to the implementation of the above mentioned resolution and invites her to continue these efforts;
4. Decides to include this item on the agenda of the 192nd session of the Executive Board and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.