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### REINFORCEMENT OF UNESCO'S ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURE AND THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL PLURALISM IN THE EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT

#### OUTLINE

**Background:** This present document is submitted to the consideration of the General Conference, pursuant to 197 EX/Decision 10 on the "Reinforcement of UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict".

**Purpose:** It presents a Strategy for reinforcing UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict with a view to its adoption by the General Conference, as revised following deliberations by the Executive Board at its 197th session.

**Decision required:** paragraph 56.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Over the past decade, the increase in deliberate attacks on cultural heritage has been associated with a strategy of violent extremism using deliberate and systematic destruction of culture as a weapon of war in order to destabilize populations and hurt societies at their core over the very long term. This strategy has been associated with the use of new technologies and communication tools in order to maximize impact and spread hatred at a global scale. We see cultural diversity in all its forms being targeted. This involves the persecution of individuals on cultural or religious grounds combined with the deliberate destruction of their heritage, places and institutions of worship, knowledge or information. This form of multi-faceted denial of culture and cultural diversity, linked with aggressive propaganda involving several actors within and across States also highlights how the destruction of cultural heritage is far more than a cultural tragedy and has become a security issue, and why the protection of culture cannot be delinked from humanitarian operations and must be a key component of any strategy for peace. These destructions fuel the worrisome trends of radicalization and extremism and resonate at the core of UNESCO's mandate to "build peace in the minds of men and women". This calls for the renewal and strengthening of tools designed to build the defences of peace. There is a need to reinforce UNESCO's institutional and operational capacity to respond to these threats in order to fulfil its mandate 70 years after its creation, and adapt it to the needs of the current context.

2. In response to the above challenges, by 196 EX/Decision 29, the Executive Board of UNESCO invited "the Director-General to elaborate a strategy, in partnership with Member States and other relevant actors, on how to reinforce UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict, including specific suggestions for priority activities and indicating the necessary financial and human resources, and submit this strategy, [...] to the Executive Board for consideration at its 197th session, as well as to the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference" (paragraph 15).

3. Pursuant to this Decision, a Strategy was therefore drafted by the Secretariat and presented to the 197th Executive Board of UNESCO in document 197 EX/10. By its 197 EX/Decision 10, the Executive Board welcomed the strategy (paragraph 7), requested "the Secretariat to revise [it] based on the views expressed" during its session (paragraph 11), and decided "to transmit [it], for discussion and adoption, to the 38th General Conference of UNESCO" (paragraph 12).

4. The strategy, revised at the request of the Executive Board to incorporate the views expressed at its 197th Session, is therefore submitted to the 38th General Conference of UNESCO for its consideration and adoption.

### **I. PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR REINFORCING UNESCO'S ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURE AND THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL PLURALISM IN THE EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT**

5. Armed conflicts have always had a devastating effect on culture and heritage, including through intentional destructions of significant markers of identity. Destructive ideologies are also not new in history. In recent decades, however, culture has been increasingly at the frontline of conflicts, with violent extremism<sup>1</sup> becoming a significant driver. Today, threats to cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict result from intentional destruction, collateral damage, forced neglect, as well as from

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<sup>1</sup> At its thirtieth session, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations General Assembly reaffirmed in document A/HRC/30/L.25/Rev.1 "that "acts, methods and practices of violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations are activities that aim to threaten the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and democracy, and threaten territorial integrity and the security of States, and destabilize legitimately constituted Governments".

the organized looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects, which today occurs at an unprecedented scale and finances, in some cases, terrorism.

6. Moreover, attacks on culture are characterized by the deliberate targeting of individuals and groups on the basis of their cultural, ethnic or religious affiliation. Combined with the intentional and systematic destruction of cultural heritage, the denial of cultural identity, including books and manuscripts, traditional practices, as well as places of worship, of memory and learning, such attacks have been defined as “cultural cleansing”.<sup>2</sup> Similar acts, such as those recently perpetrated by ISIL/Daesh in Iraq and Syria and associated groups in other countries, are undertaken to impose a sectarian vision of the world and of societies, erase cultural diversity and pluralism and deny cultural rights and fundamental freedoms. Cultural cleansing, intended in this way, aims to eradicate cultural diversity from a geographical area and replace it with a single, homogeneous cultural and religious perspective. Attacks intentionally directed against buildings dedicated to the practice of faith, education, art, science, or historic monuments, both in international and non-international armed conflicts, may amount to war crimes, in line with Art. 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

7. A related and major concern for UNESCO is the deprivation of cultural rights experienced by populations affected by conflict, particularly the growing number of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) worldwide. This includes the inability to access cultural heritage, to fully practice intangible cultural heritage and to transmit it to younger generations, to enjoy freedom of expression and creativity, and to participate in cultural life. This phenomenon is likely – in the short term – to deepen the root causes of the conflict and to generate tensions among affected populations, notably between displaced persons and host communities. In the longer term, it may cause irreversible loss of cultural diversity, making populations’ return to and reintegration in their country of origin more difficult. Conversely, experience has shown the positive role of culture-driven initiatives to foster mutual recognition and dialogue during and in the aftermath of conflict, and the critical role of culture and heritage as drivers and enablers of sustainable development.

8. The scale and systematic nature of attacks on culture, that we are witnessing today, highlight the strong connection between the cultural, humanitarian and security dimensions of conflicts. The protection of cultural heritage and diversity during conflict appears today as central not only to mitigate vulnerability; but also to break a cycle of violence whereby attacks on culture contribute to further promoting hatred, sectarianism and fragmentation within society, fuelling continuous instability and conflict. Ultimately, attacks against cultural heritage and diversity are attacks against people, their rights and their security. This has been recognized by the international community through numerous statements and declarations and, most significantly, in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199, adopted in February 2015, two United Nations Security Council Press Statements and various United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

9. It should also be noted that situations of protracted crisis and relapse back into conflict are becoming more and more frequent. As a result, opportunities for swift recovery of the culture sector are significantly reduced, leading in turn to further irreversible loss and vulnerability. Moreover, recent research has also shown how countries affected by conflicts are much more vulnerable to natural hazards, due to lack of social cohesion and effective governance, and thus more exposed to the full impacts of disasters.

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<sup>2</sup> The term “cultural cleansing” was used by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova in a public statement on the situation in Iraq in August 2014. It has since been used in public statements, speeches and interviews to raise awareness on the systematic and deliberate nature of attacks on cultural heritage and diversity perpetrated by violent extremist groups in Iraq and Syria. The notion of “cultural cleansing” is not a legal term.

10. For these reasons, there is today growing recognition that the protection of cultural diversity and the promotion of cultural pluralism, through the safeguarding of the tangible and intangible heritage of communities and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is more than a cultural emergency. It is a security and humanitarian imperative in conflict and transition situations, and an essential element in ensuring sustainable peace and development. Participation and access to culture and its living expressions, including intangible heritage can help strengthen people's resilience and sustain their efforts to live through and overcome crisis. A new approach is urgently required at both international and national levels to operationalize the link between protection of cultural heritage and diversity on the one hand; and, on the other hand, humanitarian action, peace-building processes and security policies. In defining this new approach, another significant development must be considered, namely the emergence of a number of new actors, at all levels, governmental and non-governmental, international and regional. These include well-established international organizations, such as INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, UNODC, UNIDROIT, but also ICCROM, ICOMOS, ICOM, IFLA, and ICA,<sup>3</sup> which have all strengthened their strategies and programmes to address this specific issue. These organizations created in 1996 the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS), with an aim to work to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by wars and natural disasters. There is a need to consolidate this multi-stakeholder engagement based on a common vision and shared priorities for coordinated action.

11. By supporting major post-conflict recovery and reconstruction processes in the field of culture, as for instance in Cambodia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, or Mali, UNESCO has developed extensive operational expertise, networks and good practices in the rehabilitation of cultural heritage in the aftermath conflict. The present strategy builds on lessons learnt from such experiences with a view to further improve the relevance, quality and impact of UNESCO's action to protect culture.

### **Goal and objectives of UNESCO's response**

12. UNESCO was created in the aftermath of the Second World War to "build the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women" and assure "the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science". The present strategy responds to growing requests for assistance by Member States affected by conflict. It is based on and guided by UNESCO's overall mandate in the field of culture, as well as relevant conventions and recommendations to safeguard cultural heritage and diversity, and to promote cultural pluralism.

13. This strategy also considers UNESCO's efforts to protect culture during conflict as an integral element of the overall United Nations response to such situations. Consequently, all initiatives proposed will be carried out in consultation with relevant United Nations partners at global and country levels, or as a comprehensive part of United Nations processes in response to conflict.

14. The strategy is intended to cover a six-year period, while allowing sufficient flexibility to adapt to ever changing circumstances, until 2021. At that time, a new Mid-Term Strategy will be adopted by the Organization, which would integrate relevant priorities to be pursued for the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict.

15. The overall goal of the present strategy is to reduce the vulnerability of cultural heritage and diversity before, during and in the aftermath of conflict in a context where destruction and threats are unprecedented. It builds on UNESCO's standards, technical expertise and operational experience in the field of culture, which it seeks to scale up and further operationalize. It also aims at enhancing

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<sup>3</sup> UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; UNIDROIT: International Institute for the Unification of Private Law; ICCROM: International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property; ICA: International Council on Archives; ICOM: International Council of Museums; ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites; IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.

UNESCO's capacity to act during crisis in the context of increasingly complex conflicts, when and where cultural heritage and diversity come under direct threat.

16. The two intertwined objectives of UNESCO are the following:

- **Strengthen the ability of Member States to prevent, mitigate and recover the loss of cultural heritage and diversity as a result of conflict**, by developing institutional and professional capacities for reinforced protection. UNESCO is committed to support national leadership and ownership in response, when culture is at risk or attacked in a specific country. Drawing on its comparative advantage as the only United Nations Specialized Agency with a mandate on culture, UNESCO will work with national authorities to facilitate a coordinated international response to achieve more effective results and impact.
- **Incorporate the protection of culture into humanitarian action, security strategies and peace-building processes by engaging with relevant stakeholders outside the culture domain.** This will be achieved by developing new strategic partnerships with selected actors, in particular other United Nations entities, to build synergies, operational tools and mechanisms to enable the effective implementation of the provisions of the UNESCO Conventions, notably of the 1954 Hague Convention and its 1999 Protocol, and UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; as well as to encourage culturally-sensitive humanitarian, security and peace-building approaches.

#### **Priority areas of action**

17. Building on its experience and expertise, UNESCO will scale up and expand its operational activities aimed at enhancing Member States' capacity to better protect their cultural heritage and diversity, as assets for development and peace.

18. Acknowledging that acting in times of peace for the prevention of loss of cultural heritage and diversity has often proven to be the most effective way to protect; activities will be articulated around the three stages of any emergency cycle, namely preparedness, immediate response during conflict and mid- to longer-term recovery/reconstruction.

19. At all three stages, it is important to adopt a comprehensive approach to the protection of culture during conflict, including its legal protection. Therefore, a priority of this strategy is to build synergies in the implementation of the relevant UNESCO culture conventions especially the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols, as well as the 1970, 1972, 2001 and 2003 Conventions. In this context, the governing bodies of the concerned Conventions will be invited to consider strengthening operational guidelines and procedures to further enhance the protection of cultural heritage, in all its different forms, in the event of armed conflict.

20. To prevent attacks on cultural heritage and diversity during conflict, UNESCO will further develop its technical activities aimed at assisting Member States in identifying, mitigating and reducing potential risks. Emphasis will be put on the documentation of tangible and intangible – moveable and immovable – cultural heritage, including digitization, notably by developing comprehensive inventories. Also, capacities of national and local authorities, including cultural heritage professionals, law enforcement personnel, as well as relevant civil society actors to anticipate threats, prevent illicit trafficking of cultural property, develop contingency plans and implement protective measures for enhanced security and safety at cultural heritage sites and museums, will be strengthened.

21. As risk preparedness and reduction in anticipation of conflict applied to cultural heritage management and conservation remains so far limited and under-funded, UNESCO will pursue and strengthen advocacy at all levels to promote consideration of and investment in culture as an integral part of conflict prevention strategies and operational action. Such advocacy will draw attention to State obligations and international responsibility to promote and implement, in times of peace, relevant international culture standards as embodied in UNESCO Conventions, notably the 1954 Hague Convention and its two additional protocols.

22. Also, recognizing the fundamental role of local communities in acting as bearers and custodians of cultural heritage and living expressions belonging to different periods of history, raising their awareness of threats facing culture in conflict and on the importance of its protection and promotion as an element of resilience for peaceful co-existence in multicultural societies, will be a critical element of UNESCO's preventive action.

23. During conflict, UNESCO will continue advocating for the full respect, by all parties concerned, of international humanitarian law standards pertaining to the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict, in particular the 1954 Hague Convention and its two protocols. Key principles include refraining from using cultural heritage for military purposes, as well as from direct targeting of sites and monuments. UNESCO will support efforts by Member States to further operationalize these standards at national level.

24. A major challenge is the monitoring and initial assessment of damage, destruction, looting and illicit trafficking, especially when zones of conflict are difficult or impossible to access. A priority under the present strategy will therefore be to enhance capacity to collect systematic, reliable and verified data, essential to define priority mitigating measures, prevent further loss and engage in longer-term planning for recovery. Data and documentation of deliberate attacks on cultural heritage are also critical to address impunity and ensure that perpetrators of such acts are held accountable. UNESCO will work with national stakeholders and international partners, in particular professional networks of cultural heritage professionals, to ensure a coordinated share of information, building on the positive experience of the UNESCO Observatory of Syrian Cultural Heritage, established with the support of the European Union. Finally, the use of innovative technologies, such as satellite imagery, for monitoring and assessment purposes will be further developed notably in the context of the recent partnership established with UNOSAT. When cultural heritage is damaged, destroyed or at heightened risk, UNESCO will provide its assistance in support of first aid and mitigation measures, including consolidation of damaged monuments, enhanced security at museums and sites, as well as possible evacuation of cultural assets from sites, museums and other cultural repositories, where they are at risk. Depending on needs and circumstances, this assistance may take the form of professional training, technical assistance and advice or direct interventions by UNESCO and international stakeholders, at the request of national authorities. In this connection, appropriate UNESCO coordinated rapid response mechanisms will be defined, drawing on the expertise and financial support of the Member States, and in collaboration with the United Nations and other concerned international organizations, where appropriate.

25. To counter looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property during conflict, UNESCO will further strengthen its cooperation with INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, UNODC, UNIDROIT, national specialized police units, ICOM and other partners, for the tracking, authentication, seizure, conservation and restitution of objects stolen and illegally exported. Efforts will continue to focus on raising awareness (in particular through social networks) among tourists, youth, the art market, museums and private collectors and developing capacity for lawyers, heritage managers, law enforcement agencies, civil servants, actors of the art market, police, customs and the financial sphere, for the effective implementation at national level of the 1970 UNESCO and 1995 UNIDROIT Conventions, as well as of more specific binding measures related to illicit trafficking, such as the

prohibition of cross-border trade of cultural property originating from Iraq and Syria imposed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199. A specific focus will be put on checking provenance and due diligence issues for cultural objects (in particular from Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen) entering the art market or collections, especially those of an archaeological nature, and by reporting stolen objects to the police and relevant international institutions and experts. Particular efforts will also be developed towards the use and effective implementation of export and import certificates.

26. It is essential to mobilize and federate international and national stakeholders concerned around common priorities and actions to ensure comprehensive and coordinated action in response to any specific conflict, where culture is attacked or at risk. To this end, UNESCO will facilitate the formulation of Emergency Action Plans for the Safeguarding of Culture, as it has done recently for Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. Based on such inclusive planning processes, UNESCO will seek to prepare, in a systematic manner, comprehensive Technical Support Programmes for the protection of culture during conflict for countries affected. Here, the “Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage” programme is considered as a good practice, which could be adapted to other countries, as relevant, taking into account the local context and specific needs.

27. To prepare the recovery phase in countries where cultural heritage is affected by conflicts, UNESCO will continue to document built, movable and intangible heritage, prepare and implement reconstruction and recovery strategies, through appropriate, deontological and scientific approaches, and operational activities.

28. In the aftermath of conflict, when recovery and reconstruction of the culture sector become possible, efforts will focus on supporting national authorities in assessing, planning and implementing mid- to long-term programmes for cultural heritage rehabilitation and preservation, as well as for the promotion of cultural diversity. A particular challenge here is to ensure due attention to culture, as a force for dialogue, reconciliation and social and economic development, in the context of overall recovery and reconstruction processes with many competing priorities.

29. UNESCO has also engaged a stronger cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) with respect to its investigation, in conformity with Article 8(2)(e)(iv) of its Statutes which qualify as war crimes direct attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historic monuments. The joint cooperation between UNESCO and the ICC on the Mali case, which started in 2012 in the wake of the deliberate destruction of the cultural heritage in Timbuktu, consisted in providing detailed documentation on cultural heritage to the ICC. It has also established a strong basis for further collaboration, especially when countries have not yet ratified relevant Conventions or are not States Parties to the ICC.

30. UNESCO will continue engaging in joint in-depth assessment exercises, such as United Nations/World Bank and European Union-supported Post-Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNAs), promoting a comprehensive and systematic approach to the recovery of the culture sector, which goes beyond addressing tangible damage and destructions and seeks to develop national capacities and policies for the revitalization of the culture sector as a whole. Building on its experience and expertise in post-conflict recovery and reconstruction contexts including the Balkans and Afghanistan, UNESCO will assist Member States in elaborating recovery and reconstruction strategies and plans and support the development of cultural policies.

31. Since the destruction of cultural heritage is at the frontline of conflict, the protection of cultural heritage and promotion of cultural pluralism must also be at the frontline of building peace. This implies key actions to strengthen coordination and cooperation with actors outside the cultural domain, notably humanitarian, security and peace-building actors. It is in this spirit, that during the World Heritage Committee in Bonn, UNESCO launched a Global Coalition “Unite for Heritage” with the aim

of mobilizing and engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the face of increased attacks on culture during conflict.

32. The Global Coalition will serve as a framework for continuous reflection on how to incorporate the protection of culture into the humanitarian, security and peace-building spheres. As part of its function as laboratory of ideas, UNESCO will serve as a global platform to advance ideas, as well as concrete actions in this regard.

33. The development of a common United Nations approach to the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural diversity during conflict and in its aftermath will be explored, as part of efforts to ensure overall policy coherence among United Nations entities.

34. Together with major humanitarian actors, such as UNHCR, IOM and ICRC, UNESCO will propose methodologies, tools and possibly joint operational activities to support the protection of cultural diversity as an integral element of refugee and IDP protection. Particular attention will be given to mainstreaming due consideration for refugees' and IDPs' cultural rights into the services that they are offered and benefiting from in camps and host communities. Cultural initiatives to promote mutual understanding between refugees/IDPs and host communities will also be envisaged.

35. Cooperation with the military will be further developed, including with United Nations peace-keeping forces, to enhance knowledge and understanding of international humanitarian law related to the protection of cultural heritage during conflict. UNESCO will build on the positive experience of the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2100 (2013) that established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and requested it to ensure the safeguarding of cultural heritage sites in collaboration with UNESCO. In particular, the integration of a module on the protection of cultural heritage and diversity within the standard training of peace-keeping forces will be proposed. Ultimately, it is hoped that increased awareness of the military on international humanitarian cultural heritage law will lead to the operationalization of protected cultural areas<sup>4</sup> in zones of conflict; that is significant cultural heritage sites, which are clearly identified and protected from the conflict based on a mutual agreement between military forces operating in the given area.

36. Building on the achievements of the social media campaign #Unite4Heritage, awareness-raising among the general public, and in particular young people, will be pursued and scaled up. Communication and outreach material will be developed focusing on the core values of cultural diversity and pluralism, as well as cultural heritage safeguarding to counter propaganda promoting hatred, sectarian agendas and extreme violence.

### **Implementation and monitoring**

37. At the global level, with a view to better responding to emergency situations, UNESCO has established in 2014 a Unit for Emergency Preparedness and Response (CLT/EPR). The unit will ensure the overall coordination of the present strategy for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism during conflict. This unit operates in close coordination with the Secretariats of UNESCO's Conventions, and especially with the 1954, 1970 1972, 2003 Conventions Secretariats, in order to cover all aspects of the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in times of conflict. An underlying objective in establishing the EPR Unit is to improve the coherence of the Sector's response in addressing emergencies and to ensure that adequate attention is given to long-term preparedness and prevention strategies.

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<sup>4</sup> The operationalization of the concept of "cultural protected areas" will be explored, when and as appropriate, in the context of the legal framework established by the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection Of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two additional protocols.



38. The Unit also supports UNESCO field offices that are responsible for the design and implementation of capacity-building and technical assistance activities related to emergency preparedness and crisis response in the field of culture, thereby providing technical advice and backstopping. It also ensures overall coordination with stakeholders, drawing on existing global and national mechanisms, including the newly established platform of experts led by UNESCO specifically for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199.

39. Monitoring of UNESCO activities will be undertaken by a variety of mechanisms including quarterly narrative reporting in SISTER and regular reporting to the Executive Board and to the respective Intergovernmental Committees and General Assemblies of culture conventions, as well as by the Bureau of Financial Management. Monitoring mechanisms are designed to provide an early indication of the likelihood that expected results will be attained and provide an opportunity to make necessary changes in programme activities and approaches, as appropriate.

40. In addition to these standard monitoring and evaluation processes, specific monitoring and evaluation plans, including, as appropriate, detailed monitoring and evaluation frameworks, are established for extrabudgetary projects in order to ensure effective and transparent implementation.

41. During the present biennium, as the scale of impact of conflict on cultural heritage and diversity has reached an unprecedented scale, UNESCO has been called upon by its Member States to strengthen and expand its response. In this context, a range of new initiatives have been developed: global advocacy and coordination efforts (e.g. #Unite4Heritage campaign and global coalition, support to implementation of United Nations Security Resolution 2199, emergency plans for the safeguarding of cultural heritage respectively in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen), improved monitoring and assessment capacity, as well as strengthened capacity development programmes to assist Member States in mitigating the impact of conflict on culture.

42. Such activities are largely funded through extrabudgetary resources. For example, around US \$3 million was raised to support heritage rehabilitation in Mali, with contributions from Switzerland (\$1.1 million); the EU (\$670,000); Norway (\$170,000); and the Netherlands (\$75,000). A €2.6 million-project for the safeguarding of the Syrian cultural heritage is ongoing, with contributions from the EU (€2.5 million) and the Government of Flanders (€170,000). The State of Kuwait funded the High-Level International Conference on Cultural Heritage at risk in Iraq and Syria, held at UNESCO in December 2014 (\$100 000). In Iraq, UNESCO mobilized \$1.5 million from Japan, €300,000 from Italy and \$170,000 from Norway, for activities aimed at strengthening the protection of cultural property and build capacities. In Libya, UNESCO assistance in these fields is funded by Italy and the Libyan Government (\$1 million each).

43. In terms of regular programme and budget, human resources fully dedicated to conflict response are limited. At Headquarters, the Unit for Emergency Preparedness and Response consists of one Professional and one General Service staff. In the current biennium, staff of the 1970 and 1954 Conventions, as well as those of the Arab States Unit of the World Heritage Centre have devoted a very significant proportion of their time to such activities. Field offices covering countries facing emergencies related to conflicts, such as Beirut (for Syria), Baghdad, the Project Antenna for Libya, and Bamako, do not have any international CLT staff on regular posts. Regular programme financial resources for operational activities are also limited, and used mostly to support post-disaster assessment missions, the elaboration of project proposals or coordination meetings.

44. Within these constraints, particular efforts are being made to strengthen the capacities of the Secretariat of the 1970 Convention, for it to cope with new statutory obligations, in particular the creation of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of Parties in 2013, as well as, the responsibility established by the Security Council in its Resolution 2199, to monitor and assist Member States in the

implementation of the prohibition of cross-border trade of cultural objects originating from Iraq and Syria. Indeed, it is proposed to create two Junior Professional posts in the draft document 38 C/5. It is also proposed to increase the regular programme operational budget for emergencies and activities to counter the illicit trafficking of cultural objects in the Arab States region from 1%, in document 37 C/5 (\$507 million expenditure plan), to, 8% in document 38 C/5 (\$18 million expenditure plan) out of the overall budget of the Culture Sector.

45. Moreover, during the present biennium, an amount of \$500,000 was made available from the Emergency Fund to the Culture Sector. These resources are being used to provide support for actions in Yemen, Nepal and Libya, as well as the development of training modules for law enforcement officials on illicit trafficking of cultural property. This amount is also supporting temporary assistance to the 1970 Secretariat to ensure the follow-up to UNSC Resolution 2199, as well as temporary assistance to the EPR Unit to assist in coordinating sector-wide efforts.

46. However, despite these efforts, the human and financial resources dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage affected by conflict remain insufficient for the Organization to respond effectively. Member States of UNESCO and States Parties to UNESCO Cultural Conventions have recognized the need for such additional resources.

47. The High Contracting Parties to the 1954 Hague Convention (2013) have called upon all Parties to “provide voluntary financial support to the Secretariat and the implementation of activities of UNESCO related to the Convention and its 1954 (First) Protocol”; The Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict also acknowledged “the increasing reliance of the Organization on extrabudgetary contributions”; and recommended “to increase the coordination and effectiveness of the Culture Sector’s mobilization of such extrabudgetary resources and diversify the sources of such contributions”(Decision 8.COM 13 (2013));

48. States Parties to the 1970 Convention have recognized “the need to sustainably stabilize and strengthen the secretariat’s human and financial resources so that it can meet States Parties’ expectations and needs more effectively”. MSP 6 (2015) “Invites States Parties and UNESCO to strengthen their support for activities carried out to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention by making financial and/or human resources available”. Resolution 3. MSP 10 “Also invites the UNESCO Director-General to continue to reinforce the Secretariat with appropriate financial resources and, in particular, human resources to continue its emergency action initiatives.” In its Decision 2. SC 3 (2014), the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties of the 1970 Convention also “Takes note of the increase in tasks assigned to the secretariat and of the need to strengthen it in human and financial terms”, and “Encourages the Director-General to ensure the provision of the necessary financial and human resources to the Secretariat for the adequate fulfilment of its tasks”. It further “Calls upon the States Parties to Strengthen the Secretariat with the level of expertise, stability and resources required to respond to the ever-increasing demand for its services” (Decision 2. SC 4 (2014))

49. In addition, the evaluation of UNESCO’s standard-setting work of the Culture Sector (April 2014) conducted by the Internal Oversight Service has analysed and described the current situation as unsustainable, both in terms of human and financial resources. For instance “The Secretariat (...) lacks resources, which has put constraints on the number of nominations and proposals processed and on other activities.” (Evaluation of UNESCO’s Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector, Part I, Final Report, page vi); “The resources allocated to the 1970 Convention do not (...) reflect its priority status, and financial constraints continue to be an impediment to work in support of the 1970 Convention. Additionally, the staffing of the Convention Secretariat has been and currently still is woefully inadequate to effectively serve the Convention. Over the past couple of years the situation has become ever more precarious because of increasing demands on the services of the Secretariat.

(idem, Part II, Final Report, page ii). “The diminishing resources available to UNESCO will make a direct supervision of the effective implementation of the 1972 Convention in domestic law more difficult.” (idem, Part III, Final Report, page 46, para. 159). Looking ahead, it is clear that greater efforts and additional support and funding will be necessary, and critical to ensure the implementation of the present strategy.

50. For the present strategy, UNESCO would need additional posts under regular programme resources to institutionalize a sustainable response by UNESCO to conflicts in the field of culture, adding to the modest adjustments put in place within the existing financial framework. It is proposed, therefore, to allocate from the regular programme and budget, through a phased approach, an amount of \$2.5 million, during the whole period of the strategy, i.e. over the next six years, starting from January 2016. These funds would serve to strengthen progressively the coordination capacity at the global level as well as implementation at the country level.

51. Based on UNESCO’s experience on the implementation of emergency action plans in times of conflict, an estimated amount of \$25 million, invested in a phased approach over the remaining six years of the 37 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy, is needed to support the implementation of all priority actions in the form of extrabudgetary contributions to the recently established Heritage Emergency Fund.

52. The estimated amount of \$25 million has been identified. However, it will have to be assessed against the unpredictability of emergency situations in the context of armed conflicts that may occur over the next six years. It is estimated that a total amount of \$25 million is needed to effectively develop and implement the priority actions foreseen under the present Strategy during its six-year time-frame. While noting the unpredictable nature of conflicts and of deriving needs and demands on UNESCO to respond, this amount is determined based on the following elements:

- Needs identified in relation to the protection of culture during conflict will remain significantly high over the next six year-period;
- Requests for UNESCO assistance to increase, as the Organization is called upon to scale up and expand its assistance to address, in particular, new challenges of protecting culture during conflict;
- Increase in statutory obligations for UNESCO to emerge as a result of demands for assistance, such as for instance the role of UNESCO in assisting Member States in the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199.

53. It is to be noted that for 2015 the estimated level of expenditure (staff and activities) for the implementation of UNESCO’s response to conflict is \$3.349 million, with a ratio of 1/11.5 (between regular programme and extrabudgetary funding). The full funding of the present Strategy would thus represent an increase of 124% on 2015 expenditure over each of the next six years, allowing the Organization to bridge the gaps in response highlighted in the present Strategy.

54. In order to further develop sustainable in-house capacity to protect culture in the event of armed conflict, it is critical to improve the balance between regular budget and extrabudgetary funding dedicated for this purpose. In this connection, it is proposed to allocate from the regular programme and budget, through a phased approach, an amount of \$5 million (\$2.5 million each for staff and activities), over the next three biennia, starting from January 2016 with adjustments needed in the work plan of document 38 C/5 (cf. decision paragraph 72). This would correspond to 20% of the estimated overall amount (\$25 million) necessary to implement the present strategy over the next three biennia. These funds would serve, in priority, to strengthen the Organization’s capacity to

implement the Strategy at national level, in affected countries, by creating professional regular programme posts in relevant offices, where there are currently no such positions (cf. para. 59 above). It is also proposed to seek extrabudgetary sources to fund the remaining budget of the Strategy, that is \$20 million. Ideally, extrabudgetary contributions would be made to the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund, to strengthen coherence in the implementation and reporting on the Strategy. It is to be noted that such funds will be used in priority to address urgent needs and issues in relation to the prevention of loss of cultural heritage and diversity at risk before, during and in the immediate aftermath of conflict.

55. The General Conference may wish to adopt the following resolution:

*The General Conference,*

*Recalling* 196 EX/Decision 29 and 197 EX/Decision 10,

*Also recalling* World Heritage Committee decision 39 COM/7 as well as the Bonn Declaration on world heritage of 29 June 2015 and the global coalition “#Unite4Heritage” aimed at strengthening the mobilization of governments and actors outside the culture and heritage field in response to damage to cultural heritage, particularly in the Middle East,

*Welcoming* the results of the International Conference of the Ministers of Culture held in Milan in July 2015, and in particular its Final Declaration, which reiterates the value of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, as a reflection of peoples’ identity,

*Also welcoming* the outcomes of the Paris international conference on the victims of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East, which took place in September 2015 and emphasized that cultural, religious and ethnic diversity in the Middle East represents an invaluable heritage for the region and humanity as a whole, which the international community must safeguard,

*Having examined* document 38 C/49,

1. *Adopts* the strategy for reinforcing UNESCO’s action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict, as described in document 38 C/49;
2. *Invites* Member States to support the implementation of the strategy, including by defining mechanisms for the rapid mobilization of national experts who can cooperate with UNESCO in the implementation of the 1954, 1970, 1972, 2003, 2005 Conventions, the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects and other relevant international legal instruments as agreed upon, as well as by contributing to the recently established UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;
3. *Invites* the Director-General to explore, in collaboration with Member States, practical ways for effectively implementing such a mechanism for the rapid intervention and mobilization of national experts, coordinated by UNESCO and in collaboration with the United Nations and other concerned international organizations where appropriate;
4. *Supports* the Director-General’s efforts aimed at embedding the protection of cultural heritage and cultural diversity in humanitarian action, global security strategies and peace-building processes, by means of all pertinent United Nations mechanisms and in collaboration with the relevant United Nations departments, taking into account the positive results of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA);

5. *Invites* the Director-General to integrate the provisions of the revised strategy among the priorities for document 39 C/5, to be presented to the Executive Board at its 200th session.