The programme for Heritage Emergency Preparedness and Response, implemented through the

HERITAGE EMERGENCY FUND

1. **The impacts of disasters and conflicts on heritage and their consequences on sustainable development as well as on peace and security**

World Heritage properties and cultural and natural heritage resources, including intangible expressions, are increasingly affected by disasters and conflict situations throughout the world. These threats to cultural heritage can result from a variety of underlying factors, including natural hazards, climate change and political instability, which often reinforce each other.

Earthquakes, fires, floods, landslides and typhoons have caused over the past several years extensive damage to, if not the complete loss of, innumerable cultural and natural heritage sites, museums, cultural institutions and intangible practices. In a conflict situation, heritage is particularly at risk, both because of its inherent vulnerability and for its high symbolic value. As culture is often used as a target and a source of financing of conflict, the protection of cultural heritage also has important implications in terms of international security.

Often, heritage is caught in the crossfire of hostilities between belligerent parties, or it is the victim of pillage and looting in times of chaos and political unrest. This was unfortunately the case in the 2003 damage inflicted on the National Museum of Baghdad, to name one incident. More troublingly, heritage is at times the target of deliberate destruction, with the intention of obliterating the very identity of individuals and groups, severing their links to the land and breaking the bonds that keep them together as a community. This occurred in 2001 with the Buddha statues of Bamiyan, in Afghanistan, and as we have tragically witnessed, in the northern region of Mali, as well as in Syria and Iraq more recently.

In addition to the loss of the unique records of our past of great historic, aesthetic and scientific value, the destruction of cultural and natural patrimony has a very negative impact on communities, since it affects the ability of heritage to serve as a fundamental resource for their sustainable development. It also impedes its ability to act as an anchor for their spirituality and identity, around which affected communities can rebuild in times of distress.

Immediately after a disaster and particularly during active conflict periods, people often find in heritage an essential element of material and psychological support. To be able to access one's heritage – be it a religious building, a historic city, an archaeological site or even a landscape – or simply to know that it is still there, is not only a human right. It also provides a much-needed sense of continuity and supports resilience. In complex emergency situations, culture can moreover be a vehicle to foster tolerance, mutual understanding and reconciliation, mitigating social tensions and preventing renewed escalation into violent conflict. Film, dance and theatre, for example, have been used to build mutual understanding among diverse refugee communities.

In the post-disaster and post-conflict phase, the rehabilitation of heritage may contribute to strengthening the resilience of a community, and to healing the scars caused by war, by helping vulnerable people recover a sense of dignity and empowerment. The acknowledgment and restoration of heritage, based on shared values and interests, may also foster mutual recognition, tolerance and respect among different communities, which is a precondition to a society's peaceful development.

Heritage, on the other hand, is not just a liability when it comes to disasters. A vast literature has shown that well-maintained heritage sites and structures may reduce disaster risks. They transmit traditional knowledge associated with building techniques and environmental management.

Protecting heritage from the risks associated with disasters and situations of conflict, including when lives are at risk and humanitarian concerns become a priority, is therefore a fundamental development imperative and security issue.

2. The challenges to be addressed

Within this context, many countries are both unaware of the risks affecting their heritage and unprepared to address them. Typically, heritage site managers are preoccupied with day to day issues, or with raising funds for on-going restoration or conservation work. Little opportunity or leeway is provided for disaster risk management concerns and even less for possible situations of armed conflict. Despite preparation for potential disasters, they do often occur and inflict considerable damage.

Once disaster strikes, the capacity to respond quickly is often lacking. This results in lost opportunities to control and reduce the extent of the damage. When a disaster occurs or when conflict situations arise, heritage is indeed often exposed to greater and unforeseen risks which may lead to catastrophic consequences, unless immediate safeguarding measures are taken. These risks include the collapse of destabilized structures, the looting of materials or collections and the loss of precious archival records.

UNESCO, in cooperation with a number of partners such as ICOMOS, IUCN, ICCROM and ICOM[1], has developed a variety of tools over the years to manage risks to heritage from disasters and conflict situations. These organizations address all stages of the disaster risk management cycle, that is, before, during and after an emergency situation. Activities implemented range from the development of guidance materials[2] and training programmes to response and recovery initiatives in the field.

Examples of UNESCO's intervention over the last decade include support to the management capacity of the agency responsible for the five endangered World Heritage properties of Congo; the rehabilitation of Bam

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[1] ICOMOS is the International Council of Monuments and Sites; IUCN is the International Union for the Conservation of Nature; ICCROM is the International Centre for the Study and the Protection of Cultural Property; ICOM is the International Council of Museums.

[2] See for example the Resource manual on Managing Disaster Risks at World heritage Properties (http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/630/), the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Protection Handbooks Series, covering movable heritage (see: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/museums/movable-heritage-outreach-programme/cultural-heritage-protection-handbooks-in-local-languages/) and the UNESCO/ICOM Museum Studies Training Programme (see: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/museums/unescoicom-museum-studies-training-package/)

Citadel (Islamic Republic of Iran) severely damaged by a massive earthquake; a comprehensive initiative for a culture-driven recovery in Haiti following the devastating quake of 2010; the restoration of the Kasubi Tombs World Heritage property in Uganda, destroyed by a fire; and the reconstruction of the Timbuktu mausoleums inscribed in the World Heritage List in Mali, following the recent conflict. A Rapid Response Facility, in partnership with the UN Foundation and Fauna and Flora International, has also been established to support emergency interventions in support of natural World Heritage properties.

The unprecedented attacks against culture and heritage, notably in the Middle East, together with the increased occurrence of natural disasters have, however, called for new and more effective approaches to meet these challenges.

Therefore, at its 38th General Conference in November 2015, UNESCO adopted a *Strategy for the reinforcement of the organization's actions for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict*, and, at its 39th General Conference in November 2017, the related *Addendum concerning emergencies associated with disasters caused by natural and human-induced hazards*.

The Strategy builds on the six culture conventions administered by UNESCO by strengthening their synergy and operational capacity to achieve the dual objectives:

- to strengthen Member States' ability to prevent, mitigate and recover the loss of cultural heritage and diversity as a result of conflict; and
- to incorporate the protection of culture into humanitarian action, security strategies and peace-building processes.

The Strategy, and the related Action Plan, endorsed by the UNESCO Executive Board at its 201st Session in 2017, also provide a focus for the mobilization of the Global Coalition 'Unite for Heritage'. Launched in June 2015 by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, it aims to bring together a wide range of actors from different professional fields to strengthen efforts in the protection of cultural heritage.

This involves strengthening our cooperation with traditional partners and establishing new forms of cooperation with actors beyond the field of culture such as the humanitarian and security sectors.

By protecting cultural heritage and promoting cultural pluralism in emergency situations, UNESCO contributes towards protecting human rights, preventing conflicts and building peace, upholding international humanitarian law and enhancing resilience among communities.

3. A programme for Heritage Emergency Preparedness and Response

In order to be able to assist the Member States of UNESCO in responding to critical situations and managing disaster and conflict-related risks to their heritage, a Programme for Heritage Emergency Preparedness and Response, coordinated by a dedicated Unit within the Culture Sector of the Organization, has been established, in close cooperation with the relevant Divisions at Headquarters and UNESCO Field Offices.

This programme will undertake essential activities structured around the main components of the emergency management cycle.

3.1 Preparedness

The effects of a disaster or conflict can be mitigated if appropriate measures are taken to anticipate them in the first place. Typical activities that could be implemented include:

- Development of national heritage inventories, as well as risk assessment and emergency plans for cultural institutions and heritage properties, including sites, museums and archives;
- Development of capacity-building materials and resources, based on lessons learned in each site, and their integration in capacity-building programmes in disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness for cultural and natural heritage;
- Establishment and updating of an international roster of experts in culture-related aspects of disaster risk management;
- Development of communication and educational campaigns and materials to raise awareness of the risks related to disasters and conflict for heritage, and of culture's strategic role for recovery;
- Implementation of training activities targeting staff from governmental institutions and partner organizations;
- Development of synergies among the relevant UNESCO Culture Conventions in relation to heritage and emergencies, as well as integration of a concern for heritage within international policies on disaster risk reduction;
- Conduction of research aimed at defining critical gaps and developing innovative approaches/policies/tools, including in relation to the integration of culture into humanitarian, security and peacebuilding efforts;
- Organization of international technical meetings with key partners to identify needs and possible joint actions.

3.2 Rapid response and planning for recovery

When disaster strikes, there is no time to waste in identifying exactly what the situation calls for. By sending a small team of experts within hours of a disaster, UNESCO will be able to quickly assess the needs and advise government agencies and international donors on the most critical actions required to avoid the further loss of heritage.

Furthermore, it is within the first few days or 2-3 weeks that the worst can be avoided in a disaster, if material support can be quickly provided. This could consist of the erection of temporary structures to stabilize weakened buildings, the provision of new equipment to replace damaged ones, or the rapid reconstruction of field stations to ensure that the site management authority can maintain a presence in sensitive areas.

The recovery / rehabilitation stage can be a long process requiring the participation of teams of experts as well as the establishment of multi-stakeholder management group to support national authorities and coordinate the relief effort.

Activities in the context of a rapid response and planning for recovery would include:

- Deployment of rapid assessment and advisory missions;
- Planning and implementation of urgent safeguarding measures on the ground;
- Monitoring of the state of conservation of sites through satellite images;
- Implementation of short training activities targeting staff from governmental institutions and partner organizations, within the affected areas;
- Undertaking of Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) or Recovery and Peace-Building Assessment (RPBA) focused on Culture;
- Organization of meetings for the coordination of response initiatives with concerned partners[3], including Member States, UN Agencies, international scientific institutions, military organizations, customs agencies, auction houses and so forth;
- Planning of medium to long-term rehabilitation interventions, integrating a review of disaster risk reduction strategies for the culture sector (the actual implementation of these interventions would be outside the scope of the present programme and would need to be funded through specific extra-budgetary contributions or by the beneficiary country itself, if possible);

Integration of culture into humanitarian relief efforts related to displacement, through research, promotional materials, assessments, development of guidelines, training and the organization of special events with relevant stakeholders and selected humanitarian actors at global and grassroots levels, with a particular focus on access to culture.

3.3 Communication and outreach

In addition to the above components, the programme also involves initiatives for communication and outreach. These include: the preparation of promotional and fund-raising materials, the organization of information meetings and promotional events, and the development and maintenance of a comprehensive webpage – within the website of UNESCO - on the programme of activities funded through the Heritage Emergency Fund, with updated information on current initiatives.

4. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the programme is coordinated by the Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit (EPR), based at UNESCO Headquarters and operating within the Heritage Division of the Culture Sector. The Unit plays a coordinating role and concentrate its input in the planning stages of the interventions and in the immediate response, in coordination with the responsible Headquarters and Field officers.

Periodic evaluations of the programme will be undertaken in accordance with UNESCO's evaluation policy and guidelines.

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[3] Partners would include: ICOMOS, ICCROM, ICOM, IUCN, the International Blue Shield Committee, the World Monuments Fund (WMF), the Aga Khan Foundation, the Prince Claus Foundation, the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), the World Bank, the Europa Nostra Foundation, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the Japan Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage (JCIC-Cultural Heritage), the Red Cross, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and so forth.