



# UNESCO

## Activities supported by the Heritage Emergency Fund in YEMEN



Monitoring of the state of cultural heritage via satellite imagery in Yemen (2017 and 2018) DigitalGlobe WorldView-3, 8 February 2018. DigitalGlobe WorldView Images/U.S. Department of State, Humanitarian Information Unit, NextView Licence (© 2018 DigitalGlobe). Imagery Analysis by UNITAR-UNOSAT

### Post-flood emergency interventions at the World Heritage property of the 'Historic Town of Zabid' (2019-2020)

In August 2019, torrential rain and flooding in Yemen caused damage to outstanding domestic architecture in the World Heritage property of the 'Historic Town of Zabid'. In 2019, UNESCO, with the support of the HEF and local counterparts in Yemen, launched urgent technical documentation and feasibility studies in order to raise awareness among local stakeholders about the importance of protecting the buildings. The activity also allowed for the fine-tuning of a cash-for-work scheme that will be applied for the urgent interventions. This scheme will enable low-income youth, with few employment opportunities, to contribute to the stabilization works. The activity is reinforced by a larger Site Rehabilitation Plan developed by UNESCO and SFD for the Historic Town of Zabid, which has been on the List of World Heritage in Danger since 2000. In the context of the ongoing conflict and grave humanitarian crisis in Yemen, the project implements a cash-based urban emergency intervention scheme which targets the historical sites which have the most immediate need of repairs, while providing rapid relief in the form of cash wages to local youth communities.

## Emergency rehabilitation of built heritage at the World Heritage property of the 'Old City of Sana'a' (2019)

The conflict in Yemen has affected cultural heritage and urban infrastructure through collateral damage, looting and deterioration from neglect. The World Heritage property of the 'Old City of Sana'a' has sustained serious damage. The Al-Qasimi district, near the famous urban garden 'Bustan al-Qasimi', has been so badly affected that 5 houses had been totally destroyed and 10 more in the immediate vicinity were affected. In partnership with the Social Fund for Development (SFD), UNESCO conducted an assessment of the damages to buildings and infrastructure in four Yemeni cities, covering the Al-Qasimi complex and surrounding areas and this mission also included field inspections by UNESCO experts. The urgent stabilization works aim to rehabilitate the affected houses in order to support immediate relief of displaced inhabitants, within the context of high demand for housing. The urgent interventions are reinforced by a larger 'Sites Rehabilitation Plan,' developed by UNESCO and SFD, as part of the EU-funded project 'Cash for Work: Improving livelihoods opportunities for urban youth in Yemen'.

## Monitoring of the state of cultural heritage via satellite imagery (2017 and 2018)

In the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNESCO and UNITAR-UNOSAT in 2016, the Heritage Emergency Fund continued to support the emergency monitoring via satellite imagery of cultural heritage sites. In this context, in 2017 and 2018, satellite imagery was received and analyzed for four cultural and one natural properties in Yemen: the World Heritage property " Old City of Sana'a", the World Heritage property "Historic Town of Zabid", the World Heritage property "Socotra Archipelago", the archaeological site of Marib, on the country's Tentative List, as well as the Old City of Taiz.

## Coordination of the follow-up to UN Security Council Resolutions 2199 and 2253 (2016 and 2018)

In 2016, a UNESCO Focal Point was supported by the Heritage Emergency Fund to ensure the follow-up of UN Security Council Resolutions 2199 (February 2015) and 2253 (December 2015), concerning a world-wide moratorium on the trade in artefacts of illicit origin from Syria and Iraq. Its purpose also was to provide advice and support to Member States on other issues related to the prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural property from these countries. In 2018, the Heritage Emergency Fund enabled UNESCO to proceed to an analytical assessment of reports from Members States on their implementation of Resolution 2199. These reports revealed the most commonly used trafficking routes and contributed to the establishment of a list of seized artefacts originating in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. In this context, UNESCO liaised with the United Nations Security Council with regard to the implementation of its Resolutions, including direct communication on risks of smuggling of antiquities and cultural objects from conflict areas in Yemen for sale abroad. Following an immediate request from the Security Council Committee of Resolution 2140 (2014), a template was drafted to be sent to auction houses alerting and requesting stronger vigilance regarding the potentially illegal export and sale of Yemeni artefacts. Moreover, country briefings were prepared with regards to illicit trafficking and return and restitution issues.

## Meeting on GIS, museums and awareness raising activities for safeguarding cultural heritage in Yemen (2016)

A meeting on GIS, museums and awareness raising activities for safeguarding cultural heritage in Yemen was organized in Venice, Italy, from 19 to 20 December 2016. It brought together experts from different archaeological missions in Yemen, specialists from the British Museum and Oxford University, and UNESCO representatives. The information shared during the meeting and the joint activities that were agreed upon enabled UNESCO to better plan and coordinate future activities in Yemen, within the overall framework of the Emergency Response Plan for the country.