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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-seventh session

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII
30 June – 5 July 2003

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda: Report of the Secretariat

Report on the implementation of Decisions of the 26th session of the World Heritage Committee concerning the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Palestinian Territories: Decisions **26 COM 6.1**, **26 COM 6.2** and **26 COM 24.2.5**.

SUMMARY

The 26th session of the World Heritage Committee discussed the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Palestinian Territories and took Decisions **26 COM 6.1**, **26 COM 6.2** and **26 COM 24.2.5** reproduced in Annex I below.

With respect to these Decisions, the World Heritage Centre undertook, from 1 to 8 October 2002, a mission to the Palestinian Territories. Objectives and results of this mission are reproduced in the information document below.

With respect to Decisions **26 COM 6.1**, **26 COM 6.2** and **26 COM 24.2.5** concerning assistance for the protection of the Palestinian cultural and natural heritage, the WH Centre carried out a mission to the Palestinian Territories from 1 to 8 October 2002. The mission had the following objectives:

- a) Meeting with Palestinian Authority officials in order to define modalities for the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's decisions on the protection of the Palestinian heritage.
- b) Visit the most significant Palestinian heritage sites, and meet with the local institutions to discuss the implications of a possible World Heritage listing.

2. The mission resulted in a Work-plan, agreed upon by the Palestinian Authority. This Plan of Action includes the preparation of a preliminary inventory of potential World Heritage sites, an assessment of the state of conservation of two selected sites contained in such inventory, and training activities to introduce Palestinian specialists to the objectives and procedures of the World Heritage Convention. Some additional training activities were identified, to be funded through extra-budgetary sources.

3. The first of the foreseen seven activities, propaedeutic to all the others, was a Training Course for 15 Palestinian specialists on the World Heritage Convention, to be held at ICCROM HQs in Rome at the end of March 2003. It is important to stress, in that respect, that the funds allocated by the Committee were only available starting from 2003. This Course was unfortunately postponed owing to the recent war in Iraq. The Centre is currently negotiating with ICCROM and the Palestinian Authority to identify a new suitable date. At the same time, the UNESCO Office in Ramallah, to whom most of the funds allocated by the WH Committee have been decentralised, is in the process of establishing a contract with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities for the preparation of a draft Inventory of cultural and natural sites (the future Tentative List of Palestine). The capacity of the Ramallah Office to implement this programme, severely constrained over some time owing to the difficult local situation, has been enhanced recently since the recruitment of a long-term consultant architect conservator.

4. In accordance with the recommendation of the Committee, the Centre was also able to identify extra-budgetary sources to strengthen its scope of work within the Palestinian Territories. The amount of US\$ 40.000 was secured to carry out two additional training activities, in collaboration with ICCROM and IUCN. An additional amount of US\$ 10,000 has been made available to enable Palestinian professionals to attend World Heritage Statutory Meetings and other technical events. These funds were generously provided by the Government of Italy under a Trust Fund with the Centre. Finally, the Centre is also preparing to receive, during the summer, a Palestinian specialist who will work as an intern with the Arab States Unit, so as to acquire an in-depth knowledge of the Convention and its procedures.

PROTECTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

*Documents: WHC-02/CONF.202/3;
WHC-02/CONF.202/INF.16*

26 COM 6.1 The World Heritage Committee,

1. Recalling all the United Nations resolutions related to the conflict and in particular Resolutions 1397, 1402 and 1403 of the Security Council of the United Nations, the Resolution 53/27 of the General Assembly on Bethlehem-2000 and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) and its additional Protocols;
2. Noting the provisions of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954) and other relevant international legal instruments;
3. Taking note of the Executive Board decision taken at its 164th session (164EX/3.1.1);
4. Deploras the destruction and damage caused to the cultural heritage of Palestine;
5. Emphasizing the exceptional universal value of cultural heritage in Palestine;
6. Considers that, until the conditions for the inscription of this heritage on the World Heritage List are fulfilled, appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure its protection;
7. Invites the Director-General, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to assist with the task of establishing an inventory of this cultural and natural heritage, assessing state of conservation and the measures for its preservation and rehabilitation;
8. Further decides to provide financial support for the implementation of this task and that part of this contribution should be used for training and capacity building of Palestinians specialists in the field of preservation and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage;
9. Appeals to the concerned parties to co-operate with the Director-General in his efforts in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage in Palestine;

10. Invites the Director-General to report on the execution of this decision during the 27th session of the Committee in 2003.

26 COM 6.2 The World Heritage Committee,

Requests the Director-General, as a consequence of decision **26 COM 6.1**, to seek additional resources to complement the contribution from the World Heritage Fund, with a view to launching the first phase of the plan of action before the end of 2002, and to strengthen its operational phase in the following year.³

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND BUDGET FOR 2002-2003

Document: WHC-02/CONF.202/21

26 COM 24.2 The World Heritage Committee,

(...)

5 Decides that a financial allocation of US\$150,000 be provided in favour of the protection of the cultural heritage of the Palestinian territories¹⁵ in year 2003 from the Emergency Reserve Fund in support to the following actions envisaged: definition of a detailed plan of action for the implementation of the foreseen activities, and particularly for the establishment of an inventory of the cultural and natural heritage of potential outstanding universal value within the Palestinian Territories; the assessment of its state of conservation and the identification of measures for its preservation and rehabilitation; as well as for the training and capacity building of Palestinian specialists in the field of preservation and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage and heritage information management. Selected conservation measures could be also included in the Plan of Action.