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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

30th Anniversary
(1972-2002)

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-sixth session

Budapest, Hungary
24 - 29 June 2002

**Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda: Draft decision on the protection of the cultural
heritage in the Palestinian Territories**

SUMMARY

At the 26th session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee (April 2002), a working group was established to prepare a draft decision on the prevailing situation in the Palestinian Territories (see WHC-02/CONF.202/2, Section XVI). A first draft of the decision (Annex I) was presented to the Bureau, which recommended that it be transmitted to the World Heritage Committee for consideration and adoption at its 26th session.

“The Committee:

Recalling the Resolution adopted by the 13th General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention concerning the means of ensuring better protection of the common heritage of humanity and the relevant decision taken by the Committee at its 25th session in Helsinki (paragraph IV.16 of the report of the session),

Recalling further the Resolution adopted by the 31st session of the General Conference of UNESCO concerning “Acts constituting a crime against the common heritage of humanity” and 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 and the Resolution 53/27 of the General Assembly on Bethlehem-2000,

Noting the provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954) and its Protocols, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the UNIDROIT Convention, the World Heritage Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Geneva Conventions (1949) and its Additional Protocols (1977) and other relevant international legal instruments,

Expressing its grave concern for the continuing loss of all innocent lives and at the destruction and damage caused to the cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories, in particular the reported damage caused to the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, birth place of Jesus Christ and one of the most significant and historic sites on earth; the historic centre of Nablus including its Mosques and the old City of Hebron,

Emphasizing that, despite the fact that the above-mentioned properties are not inscribed on the World Heritage List, this does not mean that they are not of outstanding universal value according to Article 12 of the World Heritage Convention,

Condemns the destruction and damage caused to the cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories as a “crime against the common cultural heritage of humanity” and **strongly urges** Israel, as a State Party to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954) and its first Protocol and to the World Heritage Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, to ensure the protection of all heritage in the Palestinian Territories in its multicultural diversity;

Invites the Director-General of UNESCO to organize a technical fact-finding and consultative mission to investigate, assess and evaluate the extent of the destruction and damage of cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories and to take appropriate actions for the rehabilitation and restoration of the damaged cultural heritage and restitution of cultural properties, and to this end, **appeals** to the two concerned parties to co-operate with UNESCO in its efforts in the protection of the cultural heritage;

Further invites the Director-General of UNESCO to take all appropriate actions, in accordance with the mandate of the Organization, and within the framework of relevant UNESCO conventions, to prevent further destruction of cultural heritage in the Palestinian Territories.”