

# WHV – Appraisal on previous, current and future conservation and consolidation work on Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela

*Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela, Ethiopia*

◆ Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage since 1978

02/10/2016 – 06/11/2016



The 11 medieval monolithic cave churches of this 13th-century 'New Jerusalem' are situated in a mountainous region in the heart of Ethiopia near a traditional village with circular-shaped dwellings. Lalibela is a high place of Ethiopian Christianity, still today a place of pilgrimage and devotion.



**Project objectives:** The main objective of the project is to deepen understanding and knowledge of the local population about the renovation works undertaken in the property, especially at the Bet Gabriel Rufael church. Having this objective in mind, the project will help measure the structural, social and religious benefits of restoration work on the site. It will create awareness to the local communities and show the importance of conservation and consolidation work for the integrity and survival of cultural heritage and to residents of the town. The project will allow the community and the volunteers to learn how to coordinate conservation work and how to manage activities to narrow the gap between local community and conservators.

**Project activities:** The volunteers will undertake a site visit of the Rock Hewn Churches to have a better understanding about former and current restoration works. As the property suffers each year from the degradation due to the penetration of water accumulated during the rainy season, the volunteers will be involved in maintenance works at the property such as cleaning and creation of drainage lines. They will also place small sitting and viewing points. Then they will measure structural, social, and religious benefits of the restoration work through surveys and seminars. They will also prepare the educational activities in schools with students and youth groups to raise their awareness about the importance of the conservation of the site.

**Partners:** Addis Ababa University institute of technology and the Authorities for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritages (ARCCH).