

**Report of the Joint OIC-French Colloquium on “Preservation and Conservation of Cultural Heritage in the OIC Member States”  
Jeddah, 14-15 May 2017, OIC GS, Jeddah- KSA**

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**First: Introduction**

1. The OIC General Secretariat, in collaboration with the Republic of France organized a colloquium on the “*Preservation and Conservation of Cultural Heritage in the OIC Member States*”. This event was held in the context of the implementation of resolution no. 10/43-C on “The Protection and preservation of the Islamic and world historical and cultural heritages” adopted by the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in October 2016 in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, with the aim of developing OIC to identify proactive means and methods to safeguard and protect the cultural heritage in the OIC Member States.

**Second: Participation**

2. Representatives from a number of Member States participated in the colloquium (annex). The colloquium was also attended by representatives from a number OIC institutions (IRCICA – ISESCO- COMIAC- ICYF-DC. The Republic of France was represented by the Culture, Education, Research and Network Department, French Foreign Affairs Ministry, and the Consulate General of the Republic of France of Jeddah.
3. The following panelists participated in the colloquium:
  - Prof. Amir Pasic, Director of the Architecture Department and Advisor to the Director General of IRCICA
  - Dr. Mohammed Abdalah El Sayed Younis, Expert of Islamic Heritage, Directorate of Culture at ISESCO.
  - Mr. Abdoul Aziz Guisse, Director of Cultural Heritage, Senegal, COMIAC
  - Mr. Alexis Mocio-Mathieu, Officer, the Culture, Education, Research and Network Department, French Foreign Affairs Ministry.
  - Mrs. Ayeh Naraghi, Founder and Managing Director, Alcove Advisors, UAE
  - Mr. Christophe Graz, Project Director, Hydea SpA, and member of ICOMOS, France
  - Mr. Otto Lowe, Co-regional manager, Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation, Madrid – Spain.
  - Mr. Marc Legrand, Development Manager, Iconem, France
  - Prof. Osamah Al Gohary, Secretary General of Al-Turath Foundation, Jeddah, KSA.
  - Mr. George Richards, Head of Heritage Programs, Art Jameel, Jeddah, KSA
  - Mr. Jamal Omar, Vice- Chair for Heritage and Museums, The Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage, KSA

**Third:            Programme**

**Day one: Sunday 14 May 2017**

**Opening Session**

4. The Colloquium started with a welcoming introduction by Mrs. Mehla Talebna, Director General of Cultural, Social and Family Affairs. Followed by recitation of Quran. Then Amb. Hesham Youssef, the Assistant-Secretary General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs delivered a statement on behalf of H.E. the Secretary General of the OIC.

The statement welcomed the representatives of the OIC Member States, the representatives of the OIC institutions and the participating experts from several international institutions working in the area of preserving cultural heritage. It also conveyed appreciation to the Republic of France and H.E. Amb. Patrick Nicoloso for their collaboration with the OIC to organize the colloquium. The statement expressed appreciation to the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage for their participation in the programme. Appreciation was also extended to the institutions and experts participating in the panels of the colloquium. The statement also pointed that this initiative comes within the OIC General Secretariat's efforts to strengthen the partnership with Member States and relevant institutions of the OIC, France, and international organizations, such as UNESCO, in order to develop practical plans to save the Islamic Cultural Heritage, including UNESCO registered and un-registered cultural heritage. It also recognized that the protection of cultural heritage is imperative in building and maintaining peace and security, especially with the adoption of the United Nations Security Council historic resolution proposed by France and Italy for the protection of cultural heritage (Resolution no. 2347 - 2017 entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security"). The statement concluded by indicating that the protection and preservation of Islamic and world cultural heritage has always been one of the main priorities of the OIC General Secretariat and that it is keen to play a more proactive role in order to strengthen political commitment in such an important domain, particularly at a time when the ongoing conflicts and wars in some areas of the Islamic world, adversely affect the Islamic cultural heritage and cause the destruction of many archaeological and historical sites.

5. Then, HE. Amb. Patrick Nicoloso – the Consul General of France in Jeddah delivered a statement extending gratitude to the OIC General Secretariat and to HE the Secretary General. Dr. Yousef Al Othaimen for accepting to hold the colloquium in partnership with the Republic of France. He noted that this event follows the Abu Dhabi conference on Preservation of Endangered Cultural Heritage held at the initiative of France and the United Arab Emirates, to which many OIC Member States contributed. Amb. Nicoloso added that the Abu Dhabi conference provided new tools to protect cultural heritage threatened by terrorism or armed conflicts, including the creation of an International Heritage protection fund (in which France contributes \$ 30 million) and the establishment of an international network of refuges for endangered cultural property. He pointed out that the Republic of France through the action of its Consulate General of France in Jeddah is content to be part of this colloquium alongside the OIC and Art Jameel, who coordinated and facilitated the attendance of the international experts. Amb. Nicoloso ended his statement by wishing all of the participating panelists, successful

deliberation and fruitful outcomes that can be the beginning of many future collaborations for the benefit of safeguarding cultural heritage in the OIC Member States and the world.

### Session one

6. The first session was moderated by Mrs Mehla Talebna, Director General of Cultural and Social Affairs. It introduced the experiences and projects of the OIC institutions (IRCICA and ISESCO) in preserving and safeguarding cultural heritage. The information shared by the representatives of both institutions was informative and provided comprehensive information on projects and activities done by ISESCO and IRCICA in relation to the protection of Islamic cultural heritage and Islamic sites in OIC Member States. It also included a brief overview of the safeguarding of endangered cultural heritage as per the outcome of the Abu Dhabi Conference.
7. Prof. Amir Pasic - Director of Architecture Department and Advisor the Director General of IRSICA made a presentation about IRCICA's activities providing extensive information on congresses, art exhibitions and activities, and library and other key projects undertaken by IRCICA in Al Quds, Aleppo and Mostar (Bosnia). In his presentation he emphasized the importance of having educational and training programs for people who are working on preserving cultural heritage. At the end of his presentation he recommended to have a common platform within the OIC to work on such projects.
8. ISESCO was represented by Dr. Mohammed Younis, Expert of Islamic Heritage, at the Directorate of Culture in ISESCO. In his statement, he gave an overview of ISESCO's major activities related to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, including their suggested practical solutions aiming to protect cultural heritage, as well as formulating programs in this regard in cooperation with other relevant OIC institutions and UNESCO. He also stressed on ISESCO's ongoing project on establishment of an electronic database of heritage, manuscripts, museums, relics and antiquity in the OIC Member States. At the end of his statement, he recommended that we work harder on the unification of efforts.
9. Mr. Alexis Mocio-Mathieu, Officer at the Culture, education, research and network Department of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gave a brief overview about the Abu Dhabi Conference held in December 2016. He stressed on the recommendation of the said conference to develop joint activities and called for contribution to the Fund established by the conference for the sake of preserving endangered cultural heritage. He also mentioned that the broad number of Member States of OIC can easily influence the international decision-making process in relation to culture heritage as OIC MSs are members of many effective international platforms.
10. A number of Member States and institutions intervened and made the following comments:
  - The representative of Palestine asked whether OIC institutions have training programs on the preservation of heritage to enhance the capacity of Palestinian heritage experts. In

response, the ISESCO representative stated that training programs are provided by ISESCO and added that Palestine is among the list of priorities when it comes to developing any programs at the ISESCO.

- The representative of Cameroon highlighted the importance of this initiative and extended appreciation to the OIC GS and France for this collaboration. He stated that culture is very important for the memory and heritage of nations and those nations should give great consideration to preservation and conservation of their cultural heritage. He also stated that people should be aware of the importance cultural heritage and professionals should be well trained and presented with the necessary tools. He also welcomed France's initiative to create special fund for the protection of endangered cultural heritage. He also stressed that cooperation between the OIC MSs to have common legal grounds related to the preservation of culture is very important, and that MSs should have a common objective and unify efforts in relation to this matter.
- The representative of Turkey seconded the intervention of the representative of Cameroon on the importance of strengthening the legal basis within the OIC Member States on the issue of cultural heritage and strengthening the cooperation with UNESCO in this respect.
- The representative of Azerbaijan made an intervention on the importance of having such an initiative and he stressed on the need to have strong unified reaction from the OIC Member States when religious places are violated and abused by perpetrators. In this respect, he gave example of a number of mosques in Azerbaijan that have been desecrated by Armenia. He also stressed the need for the OIC to use its relationship with France, as France is a permanent member of the Security Council, to support the positions of the OIC Member states in the Security Council and oppose the violation and exploitation of religious places and ask to criminalize such acts and implement sanctions on states that practice them.
- The representative of ICYF-DC expressed his appreciation to the OIC GS and France for the initiative and expressed the readiness for ICYF-DC to cooperate with OIC institutions on this matter, particularly in training the youth. He also seconded the comments of the representative of Cameroon on the importance of providing the youth with the necessary tools and educate them and train them to protect and preserve their cultural heritage. He also stressed that ICYF-DC is willing to cooperate with France on its suggestion to have a special fund for the protection of endangered cultural heritage, as per the outcome of Abu Dhabi conference.

## **Session two**

11. The second session was moderated by Mr. George Richards, Head of Heritage Programs, Art Jameel. The session included 3 panel discussions as follows:

**Panel 1:** The first panel was about the engagement of the OIC Member States with cultural heritage institutions (ISESCO – IRCICA – COMIAC).

- Mr. Abdoul Aziz Guisse, the Director of Cultural Heritage of Senegal, who delivered a statement on Senegal's experience in preserving cultural heritage. He also introduced the COMIAC experience on this matter. His intervention highlighted the importance of the inventory, the documentation and the management of heritage sites to be able to preserve, protect and return lost or stolen heritage. He also pointed out that 90% of World Heritage is within Africa, a matter that needs to be considered by the OIC Member States and OIC institutions. At the end of his intervention, Mr. Abdoul stressed the need to raise awareness on the significance of cultural heritage among communities and to promote them in order to honor their heritage as it resembles the nations' identity, history and civilization, and he called on the OIC institutions concerned with cultural heritage to join efforts and also cooperate with UNESCO in this regard.
- Dr. Mohammed Younis from ISESCO made a short intervention on ISESCO projects in preserving heritage in Member States. He also highlighted ISESCO's cooperation with UNESCO in this regard. He emphasized the importance of producing a special matrix by the OIC General secretariat on co-organized projects between the OIC institutions and UNESCO. He also stressed the need to have all OIC institutions work in synergy in order to reach the targeted goals and protect heritage in the OIC Member States. Dr. Mohammed pointed out that the ISESCO will add a referendum in the declaration of the upcoming Ministerial Conference for Culture Ministers, which will be held in November 2017 in Sudan, suggesting that "in case of war or armed conflict, an intra-OIC committee can be established to intervene between the conflicting states to ensure the safeguarding of cultural heritage in the conflict areas. Dr. Mohammed concluded with the importance of cooperation among OIC institutions and that the ISESCO already has a developed database of heritage that will be upgraded in the near future.
- Prof. Amir Pasic, the Director of Architecture Department and Advisor the Director General of IRSICA, gave a summary of IRCICA's projects on preservation of cultural heritage, particularly in Syria which started since 2013. Prof. Amir stressed that the urban culture is the most affected by wars and armed conflicts, and that it is at the forefront of conflict as a critical consideration in opposing ways: as a factor fuelling hatred and extremism, when it is under attack, and as a resource for resilience, recovery, peace and reconstruction, when it is used to promote mutual understanding. Prof. Amir concluded that the OIC Member States should develop a strategy for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism armed conflict.

12. Member States made the following interventions at the end of the first panel:

- The representative of Egypt commented on the statement of the representative of ISESCO on the proposed declaration. He stressed the importance of extreme caution when dealing with the issue of intervention for the purpose of protecting cultural heritage as this may create a dangerous political precedent that will contribute to the development of new concepts of humanitarian intervention in the internal affairs of States that the Arab Republic of Egypt strongly opposes including putting forward any suggestions in this regard at the national, international or regional level. The Republic of Egypt proposed to establish a committee within the OIC in the cases of armed conflict or war, in order to provide technical support to States that explicitly request assistance for the protection of its endangered cultural heritage within its geographical area, as a result of conflict or ongoing war.
  - The representative of Yemen thanked the General Secretariat and France for the event and raised a question in relation to the endangered heritage in Yemen and enquired on how to enhance or help the government of Yemen to return the heritage pieces stolen from the museums.
13. All the panellists agreed on the necessity to work on a global strategy and to link the latter to a joint OIC strategy for preserving cultural heritage.

**Panel 2:** The Second Panel was about Civil Society and private investment in cultural heritage preservation and conservation, and there were two panelists in this panel:

- Mrs. Ayeh Naraghi, Founder and Managing Director, Alcove Advisers, delivered a statement on several ways of private sector and civil society engagement supporting and investing in cultural heritage, which includes public-private partnerships, crowd-sourced funding for a specific programme, social enterprises, multi-stakeholder governance approaches to name a few. She stressed that private sector investment should not merely constitute financial investment or philanthropic donations but it should also include in-kind contributions such as expertise, technical assistance, access to networks, support for fundraising, creation of development programmes, etc. She also highlighted the factors that can attract private sectors to invest in cultural heritage, including their interests, potential added-value earlier on in the planning process. Mrs. Ayeh also stressed that the responsibility of creating a development plan with concrete intervention possibilities for the private sector to consider is the responsibility of cultural heritage master planners and relevant government authorities. At the end of her statement, Mrs. Ayeh concluded that the preservation of cultural heritage is a multi-stakeholders task between governments, civil institutions, national and international organizations. She also stressed that raising awareness not only on the economic value of cultural heritage as an income generator, but also the socio-cultural value as it allows for greater social cohesion among the community.

- Mr. Christophe Graz, Project Director, Hydea SpA and member of ICOMOS France, delivered a presentation on the experience of Hydea SpA in restoring and rehabilitating heritage sites in some Muslim countries (Jordan, Palestine, Abu Dhabi, and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and in the world. In his presentation, following the conclusions issued by key institutions during last January's event organized jointly by ICCROM Athar and the Louvres Lens, he pointed that the reconstruction of historic cities spans three stages, before the conflict (prevention / documentation), during (protection / identification / concertation) and after (maintenance, sustainability, re-appropriation) reconstruction; and that the reconstruction of historic cities (vs monuments) must be the object of effective cooperation at all levels, between donors, associations and professionals on the ground, and always with the populations. At the end of his presentation, Mr. Graz notably recommended that the OIC Member States should all consider registering in the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) 1995 Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

**Panel 3:** The third panel was on the use of technology in cultural heritage preservation and conservation. There were two panelists in this panel.

- Mr. Otto Lowe, Co-regional Manager, Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation, gave a presentation on the work done by Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation and how the use of technology to preserve and document heritage is very important to save heritage, and also how these technologies can be cost effective.
- Mr. Marc Legrand, Development Manager, Iconem France, gave a presentation on the experience of Iconem and their technologies used in preserving heritage in Syria and Iraq.

The Panel concluded with recommendations on the importance of the use of technology in preserving and protecting cultural heritage.

## **Day two: Monday 15 May 2017**

### **Session Three**

14. The third session was on the experience of Saudi Arabia in safeguarding cultural heritage. Four panels were included in this session:
  - Mr. Jamal Omar, Vice- Chair for Heritage and Museums, The Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage (SCTH), made a presentation introducing objectives, vision and functions of SCTH in preserving cultural heritage in Saudi Arabia. The presentation included information on all the conventions the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed in relation

to cultural heritage; it also gave a brief laws issued in Saudi Arabia on the protection of cultural heritage. The presentation also included the role of the commission in fostering and promoting scientific research and publications in areas related to cultural heritage in collaboration with national institutions and international missions of archaeological excavations. He also highlighted the most important projects of SCTH in preserving and protecting heritage sites in Saudi Arabia and its role in spreading awareness on the importance of cultural heritage among the community.

- Prof. Osamah Aljohary, Secretary General of Al-Turath foundation, made a presentation introducing Al Turath Foundation, its establishment, mission, vision and objectives. It also included the most important projects that were completed and those still undergoing within the foundation. Prof. Osamah also highlighted the projects undergoing in coordination and cooperation with IRCICA in rehabilitating urban cultural heritage of mosques in Saudi Arabia. His presentation also included information on the grants provided through the foundation and the criteria for application. At the end of his presentation Prof Osamah recommended that the OIC should not only consider preservation of heritage within Member states only, but also Islamic heritage sites that still exists in non-Muslim countries, such as Spain and Greece.
  
- Mr. George Richards, Head of Heritage Programs, Art Jameel, provided a presentation introducing Art Jameel, its establishment, objectives and vision. The presentation included an introduction to the joint collaborations of Art Jameel and the ongoing projects in Saudi Arabia and around the world including the current and soon to open Jameel Houses of Traditional Arts in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Scotland. The presentation gave a brief and informative overview of the work done by Art Jameel in preserving heritage in the old city of Jeddah, Al-Balad. Mr. Richards emphasized the close relationship between the preservation of traditional arts and crafts, and the rehabilitation of monuments.
  
- Mr. Christophe Graz, Project Director, Hydea SpA and member of ICOMOS France, delivered an adjusted reminder on the principles of sustainable development applied to the heritage field, and a brief presentation on the work done by Hydea SpA in Saudi Arabia in relation of preserving cultural heritage, notably n and around Jeddah.

## **Closing Session**

The recommendations of the colloquium were distributed among all the attendees for observations and comments.

The representative of the Republic of the Niger pointed that the draft recommendations of the colloquium highlighted the main crucial areas on the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage. However, he recommended that the General Secretariat would consider bringing up the following points to be discussed by the Member States in future meetings:



- Assisting the Member States in developing or updating their indicative lists of their cultural heritage with a view to categorize these lists for better monitoring and protection.
- To create a legal environment that facilitate funding the Member states' programmes developed for protecting their cultural heritage from any external aggression.
- To coordinate the legal frameworks established by the Member States for the purpose of combating the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property, especially in countries suffering from armed conflict.
- Building the capacities of the Member States' experts in preserving and protecting cultural heritage, via the ISESCO training programme on the preservation of cultural heritage and also on the development of legal frameworks likely to contribute to the protection of cultural heritage; also to develop training activities on the issues of looting and illicit trafficking of cultural properties in the OIC Member States.

At the end, Amb. Hesham Youssef, Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs delivered closing remarks that extended gratitude to all participating representatives of Member States, OIC institutions, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France, the French Consulate and the, the representative of SCTH, as well as the participating experts from the institutions concerned with the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage.

**Fourth:                    Recommendations**

- 1) The importance of establishing an OIC platform to bring together the Joint efforts between the OIC Member States and OIC institutions in preserving and protecting cultural heritage, in order to facilitate these efforts and fast track them to come out with visible and effective results.
- 2) Education and training are very important elements for raising awareness and equipping professionals in the field with the right tools, especially amongst the youth.
- 3) The importance of strengthening the legal basis within the OIC Member States on the issue of cultural heritage and strengthening the cooperation with UNESCO in this respect.
- 4) The importance of respecting state's sovereignty while considering the issue of protection of cultural heritage so it does not involve any kind of foreign intervention in states' internal affairs.
- 5) To develop the UNESCO World Heritage Convention to enable it to deal with the changing and emerging threats facing cultural heritage.
- 6) To establish a common platform between the OIC institutions, the national institutions, civil society, UNESCO and other UN institutions coordinated by experts under the umbrella of the OIC, in order to join efforts and create effective activities among interested OIC Member States in the field of protecting and preserving cultural heritage, in accordance with the UNESCO international Convention on World Heritage.
- 7) Giving the same importance and consideration for intangible heritage along with tangible heritage.
- 8) Developing an OIC Strategy for preserving cultural heritage with clear identification of priorities, and ensuring that this strategy takes due consideration of the necessity of respecting state's sovereignty and the non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States
- 9) The importance of imposing sanctions against perpetrators of criminal actions towards cultural heritage, especially in conflict zones in light of the relevant Security Council resolutions in this regard.
- 10) To establish a technical committee under the OIC umbrella to coordinate efforts and launch effective joint activities among the Member States in the field of the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

- 11) To call on the OIC General Secretariat, ISESCO, COMIAC to cooperate closely and unify their efforts to reinforce the capabilities of the OIC Member States and to exchange experiences in preservation and conservation of cultural heritage.
- 12) The need to strengthen the role of the media to promote and encourage governmental and civil society institutions to increase their efforts and collaborate in the area of preserving cultural heritage. Also to increase awareness among the public on the importance of this issue and the need for public commitment towards protecting and preserving cultural heritage.
- 13) The importance of reserving funds to safeguard cultural heritage and not only to rehabilitate it.
- 14) The importance of joining the efforts of the OIC institutions (ISESCO, IRCICA, IDB) in order to have effective results that can be implemented. It is also important to link these efforts to international efforts by UNESCO, and to cooperate with consultative bodies of UNESCO, such as ICOMOS, taking into consideration previous efforts including the recommendations of the Abu Dhabi Conference.
- 15) The importance of integrating training programs on the use of technology in preservation and conservation of cultural heritage in the OIC Member States and developing practical automated surveys, tools and methodologies to respond to the need to have an operational inventory to monitor, manage and maintain cultural heritage.
- 16) The importance to call on interested OIC Member States to register to the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) 1995 Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.
- 17) To recognize the close relationship between the preservation of the traditional arts and the rehabilitation of monuments.
- 18) To call on the OIC Member States to consider assisting in the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage in non- Muslim countries, upon their request.
- 19) The participants commended the efforts made by ISESCO and IRCICA in the field of the protection of cultural heritage in the Islamic world.
- 20) To bring the recommendations of the colloquium to the upcoming International Conference to be jointly organized by ISESCO and IRCICA on 1 and 2 November 2017 in Istanbul, Turkey, and to the 10th Session of the Islamic Ministerial Conference for Ministers of Culture, Khartoum, Sudan on 22-23 November 2017.

- 21) The importance of developing cultural heritage management programmes that include regular inventory systems and up to date databases to protect cultural heritage on both the national and regional levels.
- 22) Encouraging the exchange of knowledge and best practices in the field of protecting and preserving cultural heritage.

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## **Annex**

15. **Member States participated that participated in the colloquium:**

- Republic of Afghanistan.
- Republic of Azerbaijan.
- Burkina Faso.
- Republic of Cameroon.
- The Côte d'Ivoire
- Arab Republic of Egypt.
- Republic of Iraq.
- The Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- State of Palestine.
- State of Qatar.
- Republic of Senegal.
- The Republic of Sudan.
- Republic of Turkey.
- Republic of Yemen.