

Hundred and seventy-first session

171 EX/15
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Item 18 of the provisional agenda

**JERUSALEM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
32 C/RESOLUTION 39 AND 170 EX/DECISION 3.6.1**

SUMMARY

The Director-General submits this document in compliance with 32 C/Resolution 39 and 170 EX/Decision 3.6.1. The present document outlines the actions taken by the Director-General to contribute to the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem namely through the first meeting of the International Expert Committee on the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Decision proposed: paragraph 10.

Background

1. 32 C/Resolution 39 (adopted by the General Conference in October 2003) reiterated “its support for the initiative announced by the Director-General at the 31st session of the General Conference to prepare a comprehensive plan of action to safeguard the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem; in that connection, recalling the decision taken by the World Heritage Committee at its 27th session, invited the Director-General to set up, as soon as possible, in cooperation with the concerned parties, a highly qualified and purely technical mission to Jerusalem, concerning the state of conservation of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls and requested the Director-General to establish, within a year, an equitably composed committee of experts to be entrusted with proposing, on an exclusively scientific and technical basis, guidelines for this plan of action and proposals for its implementation”. Paragraph 7 of 170 EX/Decision 3.6.1 adopted by the Executive Board in October 2004, encouraged the Director-General “to continue his efforts for the establishment, as soon as possible, of the international committee of independent experts, highly qualified technically and professionally, entrusted with proposing the guidelines of the programmed plan of action and proposals for its implementation and to do so in consultation with the parties concerned”.

2. The UNESCO mission went to Jerusalem from 28 February to 5 March 2004. The outline of its findings have been made available to Members of the Executive Board in document 170 EX/10 Rev.¹

3. The first meeting of the **International Committee of Experts on the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem** was convened by the Director-General at UNESCO Headquarters on 26 and 27 January 2005. The Director-General opened the meeting on Wednesday, 26 January 2005 in the presence of representatives of the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO and Ms Valgerd Svarstad Haugland, Minister of Culture and Church Affairs of Norway. These opening remarks were followed by welcoming addresses by Mr Michael Abiola Omolewa, President of the General Conference of UNESCO and by Mr Hans-Heinrich Wrede, Chairman of the Executive Board of UNESCO.

4. The Committee of Experts is composed of 12 internationally renowned experts including architects, archaeologists, curators, restorers, architectural historians and structural engineers with professional knowledge of the Old City of Jerusalem, as well as representatives of relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations, namely ICCROM and ICOMOS.

5. The proceedings began with a presentation of an overview of the current state of conservation of the Old City of Jerusalem. The members of the Committee were informed of UNESCO activities and missions carried out for the preservation of the Old City of Jerusalem since 1969.

6. Assessment of the UNESCO technical mission dispatched to Jerusalem by the Director-General from 28 February to 5 March 2004 was provided, in particular concerning natural risk factors; planning, governance and management processes applied to the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City; impact of archaeological research; conservation of archaeological heritage; deterioration of monuments; alteration of the built fabric, urban environment and visual integrity; traffic, access and circulation and tourism management.

7. The experts identified the main fields of intervention for the safeguarding of the Old City of Jerusalem reviewing the factors affecting the state of conservation of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem. On this basis, the members of the Committee defined the approach for

¹ 170 EX/10 Rev.2 for French version.

UNESCO's action and identified possible activities, stressing in particular the need for immediate concrete and visible projects focusing on awareness-raising, community participation and capacity-building. The discussion also focused on housing and monuments conservation, training and awareness-raising and definition of priority actions.

8. The Committee meeting resulted in a number of recommendations establishing the guidelines for the preparation of an Action Plan, including appropriate coordination and consultation mechanisms, in favour of the Old City of Jerusalem.

9. UNESCO will start the elaboration of the Action Plan in close consultation with all parties concerned.

Proposed draft decision

10. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision as follows:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 32 C/Resolution 39 and 170 EX/Decision 3.6.1, as well as the provisions of the four Geneva Conventions (1949), of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and the related Protocol and of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the inscription of the Old City of Jerusalem on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and the recommendations, resolutions and decisions of UNESCO on the protection of the cultural heritage,
2. Having examined document 171 EX/15,
3. Expresses its appreciation to the Director-General for his continuing efforts in favour of the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem in compliance with 32 C/Resolution 39 of the General Conference and 170 EX/Decision 3.6.1 of the Executive Board;
4. Invites the Director-General to continue his efforts in preparing an Action Plan based on the guidelines established by the International Committee of Experts on the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem notably by enhancing and expanding existing academic networks to engage them directly in activities and initiatives for the protection of the Old City of Jerusalem;
5. Further invites the concerned authorities to cooperate with UNESCO for the elaboration and the implementation of the Action Plan and reiterates its appeal to Member States to contribute financially for the smooth implementation of the Action Plan;
6. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 173rd session.