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REINFORCEMENT OF UNESCO'S ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURE AND THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL PLURALISM IN THE EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT

SUMMARY

This present document is submitted to the consideration of the Executive Board, pursuant to 196 EX/Decision 29 on "Culture in conflict areas: a humanitarian concern and a safety issue. UNESCO's role and responsibilities".

It presents a report on the progress achieved since the 196th session of the Executive Board and a proposed strategy for the reinforcement of UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 72.

INTRODUCTION

1. By 196 EX/Decision 29, the Executive Board of UNESCO invited “the Director-General to pursue and enhance efforts to protect culture in times of armed conflict and transition, notably by strengthening the capacity of UNESCO to urgently respond to cultural emergencies and to fight against illegal traffic of cultural goods, through the operationalization of the relevant provisions of the various UNESCO cultural Conventions” (paragraph 13).

2. The decision further invited “the Director-General to enhance UNESCO’s role, within the United Nations system, in order for the cultural dimension to be taken in due consideration to strengthen intercultural dialogue, while at the same time enabling UNESCO to play its coordination role” (paragraph 14) and “to elaborate a strategy, in partnership with Member States and other relevant actors, on how to reinforce UNESCO’s action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict, including specific suggestions for priority activities and indicating the necessary financial and human resources, and submit this strategy, [...] to the Executive Board for consideration at its 197th session, as well as to the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference” (paragraph 15).

3. Over the past decade, the increase in deliberate attacks on cultural heritage has been associated with a strategy of extremists to use the destruction of culture as a weapon of war to destabilize populations and hurt societies at their core over the very long term. This strategy has been associated with the use of new technologies and communication tools in order to maximize impact and spread hatred at a global scale, far beyond the borders of existing battlefields, including for the recruitment foreign soldiers. We see cultural diversity in all its forms being targeted as well as institutions and professionals working to sustain free thinking and freedom of opinion. The persecution of individuals on cultural or religious grounds combined with the deliberate destruction of their heritage, places and institutions of worship, knowledge or information can be described as “cultural cleansing”. This form of multi-faceted abuse of culture, linked with aggressive propaganda is a key feature of modern wars, especially in intra-State conflicts involving non-State actors. It also highlights how the destruction of cultural heritage is far more than a cultural tragedy and has become a security issue, and why the protection of culture cannot be delinked from humanitarian operations and must be a key component of any strategy for peace. These destructions fuel the worrisome trends of radicalization and extremism and resonate at the core of UNESCO’s mandate to “build peace in the minds of men and women”. This calls for the renewal and strengthening of all tools designed to build moral and intellectual defences of peace. There is a need to reinforce UNESCO’s institutional and operational capacity to respond to these threats in order to fulfil its mandate 70 years after its creation, and adapt it to the needs of the current context.

I. REPORT ON PROGRESS

4. With regard to the progress achieved by UNESCO – since April 2015 – in implementing the actions requested in 196 EX/Decision 29, notably in its paragraphs 13 and 14, the following activities were undertaken:

5. Efforts to protect culture in times of armed conflict and transition were pursued through the operationalization of the relevant provisions of its various culture conventions, through a number of initiatives in response to the ongoing crises in Yemen, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

6. In response to the crisis that unfolded in Yemen over the past months, the Director-General provided a no-strike list of important heritage sites in Yemen, including their geographical coordinates. In the face of reports of considerable damage to heritage assets, this was complemented by diplomatic initiatives and a number of public statements aimed at sensitizing the parties to the conflict to their obligations under the 1954 Hague Convention. UNESCO, in cooperation with the category 2 Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), convened a coordination meeting on protection measures regarding Yemeni cultural heritage in Manama,

Bahrein in April 2015. An emergency response plan was launched on 13 May 2015, in consultation with the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities of Yemen (GOPHCY) and the General Organisation of Antiquities, Museums and Manuscripts of Yemen (GOAMM). An expert meeting for the safeguarding of Yemen's cultural heritage at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 15 and 16 July 2015 established a comprehensive action plan, as well as network of international partners to support its implementation.

7. In relation to monitoring the damage to Yemeni cultural heritage, UNESCO prepared rapid assessment tools for historical buildings, archaeological sites and museum collections in Yemen to be used in the field, in cooperation with ARC-WH, the GOPHCY, and the OAMM. These were also distributed to United Nations and other humanitarian partners active in the country. In cooperation with the regional conservation centre for Architectural and Archaeological Tangible Heritage in the Arab Region (ICCROM-ATHAR), UNESCO is developing a recorded training course on risk management, rapid documentation techniques and disaster risk preparedness. Furthermore, UNESCO is revising the Geographic Information System (GIS) database of the Old City of Sana'a, recently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Bonn, Germany, 2015), in close cooperation with the GOPHCY, and is establishing an expert list for cultural heritage in Yemen and mapping repositories of information on heritage.

8. With regard to Iraq, UNESCO began implementing a project on "Preventive Conservation of Iraq's Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk", while continuing to monitor the situation in close cooperation with the Iraqi authorities and specialized departments. On 28 July 2015, UNESCO signed an agreement with the Iraqi authorities for the implementation of the eighteen-month project "The Conservation and management of the World Heritage site of Samarra Archaeological City Phase 1: Great Mosque and Al-Melwiyah Minaret". Furthermore, an information meeting on "The role of the international community in protecting Iraq's cultural heritage" was organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to Iraq and UNESCO at the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad on 13 July 2015, within the framework of the United Nations Resolution A/RS/69/281 entitled "Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq", which was submitted by Iraq and Germany to the United Nations General Assembly and adopted on 28 May 2015, preceded by two resolutions adopted by the Executive Board of UNESCO, proposed at the initiative of France and Iraq (195 EX/31), and of Italy and Spain (196 EX/29) respectively. An overview of the activities undertaken in Iraq between October 2014 and April 2015 had previously been presented to the Executive Board through document 196 EX/5.

9. Regarding Libya, between April and June 2015, UNESCO conducted a series of round tables and training sessions in Tunisia, aimed at cultural heritage professional staff, local authorities and law enforcement personnel. Urgent measures to strengthen protection and security at museums/warehouses, as well as at World Heritage sites were discussed during a three-day round table in Tunis (27-29 April 2015), that brought together UNESCO and the Department of Antiquities (DoA) of Libya. From 13 to 16 June 2015, a training course to reinforce security and anti-terrorism measures for museums and sites was attended by 20 Libyan professionals from inspectorates of the DoA, site/museum guards and tourist police officers from all over Libya. Moreover, 22 Libyan professionals from various DoA inspectorates, as well as representatives of civil defence, municipalities, and security forces, the Libyan Red Crescent Society and associations working in the field of heritage, were introduced to rapid documentation techniques, the assessment and monitoring of cultural heritage in Libya, as well as preventive measures to protect cultural heritage, and *in-situ* conservation, during a training course jointly organized by UNESCO and ICCROM-Athar, "in Preventive Conservation and Risk Preparedness for Cultural Heritage", in Djerba (Tunisia, 11-15 June 2015). UNESCO and the DoA are currently examining the emergency measures required to secure collections at risk in Western and Eastern Libya.

10. For Syria, UNESCO is continuing to implement the European Union-funded project "Emergency Safeguarding of Cultural heritage in Syria", in partnership with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Study of the

Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), focusing on monitoring and assessment, capacity-building, first-aid response, and awareness-raising. Together with ICCROM-ATHAR, and with the financial support of the ARC-WH, UNESCO organized a training course for Syrian professionals in Beirut, Lebanon, with the aim of establishing national teams capable of undertaking emergency response interventions to secure endangered built cultural heritage, as well as training other teams within the country. Held from 1 to 10 June 2015, the workshop brought together 23 architects, restoration experts, civil engineers, museum curators and archaeologists from major Syrian cities and the country's cultural institutions. International and Syrian experts as well as local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) conducted the workshop that was developed in close cooperation with the Syrian Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM). It was composed of four main modules: rapid documentation; damage assessment and structural analysis; risk assessment and management; and working with local communities. A module concerning movable heritage disaster management was also proposed, including objects evacuation planning and secure storage of objects.

11. After its initial launch in Baghdad on 28 March 2015, by the Director-General with students at the University of Baghdad, the #Unite4Heritage campaign was also launched in Syria at the beginning of May 2015, involving museums and heritage sites across the country; in Lebanon, at the National Museum in Beirut, on 16 May; in Libya, on 21 May 2015 on the occasion of World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development; as well as in Erbil, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, on 11 July 2015 and in Mali in April 2015. It was also decided to extend the duration of the campaign until the end of 2015. By the end of June 2015, at least eight UNESCO field offices organized events and initiatives related to the campaign; 532 articles in print press covered the campaign, while 20,000 tweets were published with the hashtag #Unite4Heritage; 22,000 visits to the campaign website were recorded; and 105 campaign-related tweets published by UNESCO generated 3.3 million views.

12. On 18 and 19 July 2015, the World Heritage Centre organized a meeting which gathered a group of multidisciplinary international scholars and professionals to initiate a reflection on, and lay the foundations for an elaborated approach to post-conflict reconstruction in the Middle East context. The meeting addressed theoretical approaches, comparative historical overviews of post-war reconstruction since the First World War, and several recent case studies in Mali, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Bosnia, with a focus on urban reconstruction and on the Old City of Aleppo in Syria. The meeting's conclusions have led to a set of operational recommendations for preparing the recovery phase, along with concrete proposals on the way forward to draw clear guidelines and actions on post-conflict reconstruction in relation with the World Heritage Convention.

13. Furthermore, on 29 June 2015, in the framework of the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee, in Bonn, Germany, the Chairs of the six UNESCO Culture Conventions met for the first time to discuss ways to work more effectively together and reflect on the future of the Organization's standard-setting action in the face of contemporary challenges and emerging needs.

14. As regards the implementation of the United Nations Security Council 2199 on the financing of terrorism, adopted on 12 February 2015, which bans trade in cultural objects from Iraq and Syria, the Director-General convened a restricted meeting on 1 April at UNESCO Headquarters, bringing together the heads of institutions that partnered with UNESCO to assist United Nations Member States and combat illicit trafficking (United Nations Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, World Customs Organization (WCO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), INTERPOL, ICOM and ICOMOS). As a result of this meeting, a platform of experts, a timeline and a roadmap for action focused on coordination mechanisms for information sharing and joint actions were established. Guidelines for the implementation of Resolution 2199 and the related reporting were also developed, which were subsequently shared with Member States by circular letter dated 5 May 2015. Thirty Member States provided information on measures they had taken to implement resolution 2199. UNESCO's inputs, including the analysis of the Member States' reports, were shared with the United Nations Sanctions Monitoring Team to

prepare its report on progress in the implementation of Resolution 2199, to be published in mid-July 2015. A preliminary evaluation of the counter measures adopted by Member States reveals that two different components have been prioritized: strengthening the legal framework and developing awareness-raising/capacity-building activities. Despite the current limited scope of the direct legal implementation, Member States have stepped up their efforts on the national application of the due diligence principle, which requires that a certain standard of care be shown by the possible buyer of an artefact in order to ensure the legality of the trade of the object. This can be considered as a direct impact of Res. 2199. On the basis of the responses received, UNESCO further encourages Member States to apply a set of measures, i.e. undertaking action at the level of the art market in order to target the chain of traffic at its endpoint; promoting the ratification and enhanced implementation of the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention; strengthening due diligence careful search of provenance responsibility of good faith purchase; implementing national educational and awareness-raising campaigns; and cooperating with the financial, trade and banking sectors in light of the high risks of money laundering and investments in antiquities.

15. Also as a follow-up to the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2199, the Director-General and the Secretary-General of INTERPOL addressed members of the United Nations Security Council on “Combating the Destruction, Smuggling and Theft of Cultural Heritage” in New York, on 27 April 2015. The meeting was convened by the Permanent Missions of Jordan and France to the United Nations, co-presidents of the Security Council, under the Arria Formula. On 28 May 2015, the Director-General participated in the plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the occasion of the adoption of its resolution on “Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq”. Subsequently, she was invited to take part in the Ministerial Meeting of the Small Group of the Global Coalition to counter ISIL/Daesh, held in Paris on 2 June 2015, where she addressed the members of the Coalition at the invitation of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Laurent Fabius. All of these events testify to the growing level of awareness of the security implications of attacks on culture and to UNESCO’s leading role in advocating for a stronger integration between the protection of culture, security policies and peace-building processes.

16. In this connection, on 29 June 2015, the Director-General together with Professor Maria Böhmer, Chairperson of the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee, launched the global coalition “Unite for Heritage” in the framework of the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee in Bonn, Germany, aimed at strengthening UNESCO’s action for the protection of culture in emergency situations by engaging with a wide array of partners. The global coalition aims at expanding support to the protection of heritage to involve security and humanitarian organizations, governments, the private sector, civil society and the media. The launch of the global coalition was directly preceded by the adoption by consensus of the “Bonn Declaration” by the World Heritage Committee. The declaration condemns attacks on World Heritage sites perpetrated by ISIL/Daesh and expresses its concern for other sites in Syria and Yemen. It further recommends that the cultural dimension be included in peacekeeping efforts undertaken by the United Nations where necessary and that UNESCO coordinates the international response for the protection of cultural heritage in conflict or natural disaster situations.

17. UNESCO has also provided monthly briefings and reports on its action and included information on culture and heritage in the monthly reports by the United Nations Secretary-General on the humanitarian situation in Syria pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191, as well as on the situation in Libya. In the report of the United Nations Headquarters’ Strategic Assessment Mission (SAM) to Iraq, conducted from 21 to 29 April 2015, reference is made to cultural cleansing as a war tactic. This is of particular significance since part of the information included in the SAM and the external recommendations, endorsed by the United Nations Secretary-General, will be included in the next report of the SG on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and by the Security Council to inform the resolution that will renew the mission’s mandate.

18. On 29 June 2015, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2227, extending the mandate of MINUSMA (the peace-keeping mission to Mali),

stating, within its mandate, the “support for cultural preservation – in collaboration with UNESCO”. In July 2015, UNESCO completed the reconstruction of the 14 mausoleums in Timbuktu, which were destroyed by armed groups in 2012. The Director-General paid an official visit to the Republic of Mali in July 2015 to officially conclude the process of rehabilitation, as an integral part of UNESCO’s response to the destruction of cultural heritage in conflict, during a ceremony in the presence of the Minister of Culture and the Imam of the Djingareyber mosque. This ceremony took place in the presence of the donors that have provided funding to UNESCO, for the reconstruction and rehabilitation process.

19. To further strengthen synergies between UNESCO and other United Nations entities in relation to the protection of culture during emergencies, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 30 June 2015 with UNITAR-UNOSAT, the specialized agency on remote sensing, which enables UNESCO to enhance its capacities to monitor and assess damage to culture heritage via satellite imagery. Moreover, UNESCO contributed to the regional workshop on “Cross-border cooperation to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts” (Sharm el-Sheikh, 27-29 May 2015), organized by the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UNODC (TPB/UNODC). The workshop included a specific session on preventive action and inter-institutional cooperation in relation to the illicit trafficking and sale of antiquities and cultural artefacts as a source of financing for terrorism. In this spirit of regional cooperation under UNESCO’s auspices, the Director-General opened a conference in Cairo on “Cultural property under threat: the cultural, economic and security impact of the antiquities theft in the Middle East” (13-14 May 2015). Organized by the Egyptian Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Antiquities, the Middle East Institute, and the Antiquities Coalition it resulted in a series of recommendations, highlighting the importance of scaling up regional cooperation in fighting the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

20. To complement and further strengthen efforts in this area, the Secretariat is submitting to the Executive Board the following strategy in response to 196 EX/Decision 29, paragraph 15.

II. PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR REINFORCING UNESCO’S ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURE AND THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL PLURALISM IN THE EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT

21. Armed conflicts have always had a devastating effect on culture and heritage, including through intentional destructions of significant markers of identity. Destructive ideologies are also not new in history. In recent decades, however, culture has been increasingly at the frontline of conflicts, with violent extremism becoming a significant driver. Today, threats to cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict result from intentional destruction, collateral damage, forced neglect, as well as from the organized looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects, which today occurs at an unprecedented scale and finances, in some cases, terrorism.

22. Moreover, attacks on culture are characterized by the deliberate targeting of individuals and groups on the basis of their cultural, ethnic or religious affiliation. Combined with the intentional and systematic destruction of cultural heritage, the denial of cultural identity, including books and manuscripts, traditional practices, as well as places of worship, of memory and learning, such attacks can be defined as “cultural cleansing”. Similar acts, such as those recently perpetrated by ISIL/Daesh in Iraq and Syria and associated groups in other countries, are undertaken to impose a sectarian vision of the world and of societies, erase cultural diversity and pluralism and deny cultural rights and fundamental freedoms. Cultural cleansing, intended in this way, aims to eradicate cultural diversity from a geographical area and replace it with a single, homogeneous cultural and religious perspective. Attacks intentionally directed against buildings dedicated to the practice of faith, education, art, science, or historic monuments, both in international and non-international armed conflicts, may amount to war crimes, in line with Art. 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

23. A related and major concern for UNESCO is the deprivation of cultural rights experienced by populations affected by conflict, particularly the growing number of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) worldwide. This includes the inability to access cultural heritage, to fully practice intangible cultural heritage and to transmit it to younger generations, to enjoy freedom of expression and creativity, and to participate in cultural life. This phenomenon is likely – in the short term – to deepen the root causes of the conflict and to generate tensions among affected populations, notably between displaced persons and host communities. In the longer term, it may cause irreversible loss of cultural diversity, making populations' return to and reintegration in their country of origin more difficult. Conversely, experience has shown the positive role of culture-driven initiatives to foster mutual recognition and dialogue during and in the aftermath of conflict, and the critical role of culture and heritage as drivers and enablers of sustainable development.

24. The scale and systematic nature of attacks on culture, that we are witnessing today, highlight the strong connection between the cultural, humanitarian and security dimensions of conflicts. The protection of cultural heritage and diversity during conflict appears today as central not only to mitigate vulnerability; but also to break a cycle of violence whereby attacks on culture contribute to further promoting hatred, sectarianism and fragmentation within society, fuelling continuous instability and conflict. Ultimately, attacks against cultural heritage and diversity are attacks against people, their rights and their security. This has been recognized by the international community through numerous statements and declarations and, most significantly, in the United Nations Security Council resolution 2199, adopted in February 2015, two United Nations Security Council press statements and various United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

25. It should also be noted that situations of protracted crisis and relapse back into conflict are becoming more and more frequent. As a result, opportunities for swift recovery of the culture sector are significantly reduced, leading in turn to further irreversible loss and vulnerability. Moreover, recent research has also shown how countries affected by conflicts are much more vulnerable to natural hazards, due to lack of social cohesion and effective governance, and thus more exposed to the full impacts of disasters.

26. For these reasons, there is today growing recognition that the protection of cultural diversity and the promotion of cultural pluralism, through the safeguarding of the tangible and intangible heritage of communities and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is more than a cultural emergency. It is a security and humanitarian imperative in conflict and transition situations, and an essential element in ensuring sustainable peace and development. Participation and access to culture and its living expressions, including intangible heritage can help strengthen people's resilience and sustain their efforts to live through and overcome crisis. A new approach is urgently required at both international and national levels to operationalize the link between protection of cultural heritage and diversity on the one hand; and, on the other hand, humanitarian action, peacebuilding processes and security policies. In defining this new approach, another significant development must be considered, namely the emergence of a number of new actors, at all levels, governmental and non-governmental, international and regional. These include well-established international organizations, such as INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, UNODC, UNIDROIT, but also ICCROM, ICOMOS, ICOM, IFLA, and ICA,¹ which have all strengthened their strategies and programmes to address this specific issue. These organizations created in 1996 the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS), with an aim to work to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by wars and natural disasters. There is a need to consolidate this multi-stakeholder engagement based on a common vision and shared priorities for coordinated action.

27. By supporting major post-conflict recovery and reconstruction processes in the field of culture, as for instance in Cambodia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, or Mali, UNESCO has developed

¹ UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; UNIDROIT: International Institute for the Unification of Private Law; ICCROM: International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property; ICA: International Council on Archives; ICOM: International Council of Museums; ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites; IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.

extensive operational expertise, networks and good practices in the rehabilitation of cultural heritage in the aftermath conflict. The present strategy builds on lessons learnt from such experiences with a view to further improve the relevance, quality and impact of UNESCO's action to protect culture.

Goal and objectives of UNESCO's response

28. UNESCO was created in the aftermath of the Second World War to “build the defences of peace in the minds of men and women” and assure “the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science”. The present strategy responds to growing requests for assistance by Member States affected by conflict. It is based on and guided by UNESCO's overall mandate in the field of culture, as well as relevant conventions and recommendations to safeguard cultural heritage and diversity, and to promote cultural pluralism.

29. This strategy also considers UNESCO's efforts to protect culture during conflict as an integral element of the overall United Nations response to such situations. Consequently, all initiatives proposed will be carried out in consultation with relevant United Nations partners at global and country levels, or as a comprehensive part of United Nations processes in response to conflict.

30. The strategy is intended to cover a six-year period, while allowing sufficient flexibility to adapt to ever changing circumstances, until 2021. At that time, a new mid-term strategy will be adopted by the Organization, which would integrate relevant priorities to be pursued for the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict.

31. The overall goal of the present strategy is to reduce the vulnerability of cultural heritage and diversity before, during and in the aftermath of conflict in a context where destruction and threats are unprecedented. It builds on UNESCO's standards, technical expertise and operational experience in the field of culture, which it seeks to scale up and further operationalize. It also aims at enhancing UNESCO's capacity to act during crisis in the context of increasingly complex conflicts, when and where cultural heritage and diversity come under direct threat.

32. The two intertwined objectives of UNESCO are the following:

- **Strengthen the ability of Member States to prevent, mitigate and recover the loss of cultural heritage and diversity as a result of conflict**, by developing institutional and professional capacities for reinforced protection. UNESCO is committed to support national leadership and ownership in response, when culture is at risk or attacked in a specific country. Drawing on its comparative advantage as the only United Nations specialized agency with a mandate on culture, UNESCO will work with national authorities to facilitate a coordinated international response to achieve more effective results and impact.
- **Incorporate the protection of culture into humanitarian action, security strategies and peacebuilding processes by engaging with relevant stakeholders outside the culture domain**. This will be achieved by developing new strategic partnerships with selected actors, in particular other United Nations entities, to build synergies, operational tools and mechanisms to enable the effective implementation of the provisions of the UNESCO Conventions, notably of the 1954 Hague Convention and its 1999 Protocol, and UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; as well as to encourage culturally-sensitive humanitarian, security and peacebuilding approaches.

Priority areas of action

33. Building on its experience and expertise, UNESCO will scale up and expand its operational activities aimed at enhancing Member States' capacity to better protect their cultural heritage and diversity, as assets for development and peace.

34. Acknowledging that acting in times of peace for the prevention of loss of cultural heritage and diversity has often proven to be the most effective way to protect; activities will be articulated around the three stages of any emergency cycle, namely preparedness, immediate response during conflict and mid- to longer-term recovery/reconstruction.

35. At all three stages, it is important to adopt a comprehensive approach to the protection of culture during conflict, including its legal protection. Therefore, a priority of this strategy is to build synergies in the implementation of the relevant UNESCO culture conventions especially the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols, as well as the 1970, 1972, 2001 and 2003 Conventions. In this context, the governing bodies of the concerned Conventions will be invited to consider strengthening operational guidelines and procedures to further enhance the protection of cultural heritage, in all its different forms, in the event of armed conflict.

36. To prevent attacks on cultural heritage and diversity during conflict, UNESCO will further develop its technical activities aimed at assisting Member States in identifying, mitigating and reducing potential risks. Emphasis will be put on the documentation of tangible and intangible – moveable and immovable – cultural heritage, including digitization, notably by developing comprehensive inventories. Also, capacities of national and local authorities, including cultural heritage professionals, law enforcement personnel, as well as relevant civil society actors to anticipate threats, prevent illicit trafficking of cultural property, develop contingency plans and implement protective measures for enhanced security and safety at cultural heritage sites and museums, will be strengthened.

37. As risk preparedness and reduction in anticipation of conflict applied to cultural heritage management and conservation remains so far limited and under-funded, UNESCO will pursue and strengthen advocacy at all levels to promote consideration of and investment in culture as an integral part of conflict prevention strategies and operational action. Such advocacy will draw attention to State obligations and international responsibility to promote and implement, in times of peace, relevant international culture standards as embodied in UNESCO Conventions, notably the 1954 Hague Convention and its two additional protocols.

38. Also, recognizing the fundamental role of local communities in acting as bearers and custodians of cultural heritage and living expressions belonging to different periods of history, raising their awareness on threats facing culture in conflict and on the importance of its protection and promotion as an element of resilience for peaceful co-existence in multicultural societies, will be a critical element of UNESCO's preventive action.

39. During conflict, UNESCO will continue advocating the full respect, by all parties concerned, of international humanitarian law standards pertaining to the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict, in particular the 1954 Hague Convention and its two protocols. Key principles include refraining from using cultural heritage for military purposes, as well as from direct targeting of sites and monuments. UNESCO will support efforts by Member States to further operationalize these standards at national level.

40. A major challenge is the monitoring and initial assessment of damage, destruction, looting and illicit trafficking, especially when zones of conflict are difficult or impossible to access. A priority under the present strategy will therefore be to enhance capacity to collect systematic, reliable and verified data, essential to define priority mitigating measures, prevent further loss and engage in longer-term planning for recovery. Data and documentation of deliberate attacks on cultural heritage are also critical to address impunity and ensure that perpetrators of such acts are held

accountable. UNESCO will work with national stakeholders and international partners, in particular professional networks of cultural heritage professionals, to ensure a coordinated share of information, building on the positive experience of the UNESCO Observatory of Syrian Cultural Heritage, established with the support of the European Union. Finally, the use of innovative technologies, such as satellite imagery, for monitoring and assessment purposes will be further developed notably in the context of the recent partnership established with UNOSAT.

41. When cultural heritage is damaged, destroyed or at heightened risk, UNESCO will provide its assistance in support of first aid and mitigation measures, including consolidation of damaged monuments, enhanced security at museums and sites, as well as possible evacuation of cultural assets from sites, museums and other cultural repositories, where they are at risk. Depending on needs and circumstances, this assistance may take the form of professional training, technical assistance and advice or direct interventions by UNESCO and international stakeholders, at the request of national authorities.

42. To counter looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property during conflict, UNESCO will further strengthen its cooperation with INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, UNODC, UNIDROIT, national specialized police units, ICOM and other partners, for the tracking, authentication, seizure, conservation and restitution of objects stolen and illegally exported. Efforts will continue to focus on raising awareness (in particular through social networks) among tourists, youth, the art market, museums and private collectors and developing capacity for lawyers, heritage managers, law enforcement agencies, civil servants, actors of the art market, police, customs and the financial sphere, for the effective implementation at national level of the 1970 UNESCO and 1995 UNIDROIT Conventions, as well as of more specific binding measures related to illicit trafficking, such as the prohibition of cross-border trade of cultural property originating from Iraq and Syria imposed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199. A specific focus will be put on checking provenance and due diligence issues for cultural objects (in particular from Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen) entering the art market or collections, especially those of an archaeological nature, and by reporting stolen objects to the police and relevant international institutions and experts. Particular efforts will also be developed towards the use and effective implementation of export and import certificates

43. It is essential to mobilize and federate international and national stakeholders concerned around common priorities and actions to ensure comprehensive and coordinated action in response to any specific conflict, where culture is attacked or at risk. To this end, UNESCO will facilitate the formulation of Emergency Action Plans for the Safeguarding of Culture, as it has done recently for Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. Based on such inclusive planning processes, UNESCO will seek to prepare, in a systematic manner, comprehensive Technical Support Programmes for the protection of culture during conflict for countries affected. Here, the “Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage” programme is considered as a good practice, which could be adapted to other countries, as relevant, taking into account the local context and specific needs.

44. To prepare the recovery phase in countries where cultural heritage is affected by conflicts, UNESCO will continue to document built, movable and intangible heritage, prepare and implement reconstruction and recovery strategies, through appropriate, deontological and scientific approaches, and operational activities.

45. In the aftermath of conflict, when recovery and reconstruction of the culture sector become possible, efforts will focus on supporting national authorities in assessing, planning and implementing mid- to long-term programmes for cultural heritage rehabilitation and preservation, as well as for the promotion of cultural diversity. A particular challenge here is to ensure due attention to culture, as a force for dialogue, reconciliation and social and economic development, in the context of overall recovery and reconstruction processes with many competing priorities.

46. UNESCO has also engaged a stronger cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) with respect to its investigation, in conformity with Article 8(2)(e)(iv) of its Statutes which

qualify as war crimes direct attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historic monuments. The joint cooperation between UNESCO and the ICC on the Mali case, which started in 2012 in the wake of the deliberate destruction of the cultural heritage in Timbuktu, consisted in providing detailed documentation on cultural heritage to the ICC. It has also established a strong basis for further collaboration, especially when countries have not yet ratified relevant Conventions or are not States Parties to the ICC.

47. UNESCO will continue engaging in joint in-depth assessment exercises, such as United Nations/World Bank and European Union supported post-conflict needs assessment (PCNAs), promoting a comprehensive and systematic approach to the recovery of the culture sector, which goes beyond addressing tangible damage and destructions and seeks to develop national capacities and policies for the revitalization of the culture sector as a whole. Building on its experience and expertise in post-conflict recovery and reconstruction contexts including the Balkans and Afghanistan, UNESCO will assist Member States in elaborating recovery and reconstruction strategies and plans and support the development of cultural policies.

48. Since the destruction of cultural heritage is at the frontline of conflict, the protection of cultural heritage and promotion of cultural pluralism must also be at the frontline of building peace. This implies key actions to strengthen coordination and cooperation with actors outside the cultural domain, notably humanitarian, security and peace-building actors. It is in this spirit, that during the World Heritage Committee in Bonn, UNESCO launched a Global Coalition “Unite for Heritage” with the aim of mobilizing and engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the face of increased attacks on culture during conflict.

49. The Global Coalition will serve as a framework for continuous reflection on how to incorporate the protection of culture into the humanitarian, security and peacebuilding spheres. As part of its function as laboratory of ideas, UNESCO will serve as a global platform to advance ideas, as well as concrete actions in this regard.

50. The development of a common United Nations approach to the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural diversity during conflict and in its aftermath will be explored, as part of efforts to ensure overall policy coherence among United Nations entities.

51. Together with major humanitarian actors, such as UNHCR, IOM and ICRC, UNESCO will propose methodologies, tools and possibly joint operational activities to support the protection of cultural diversity as an integral element of refugee and IDP protection. Particular attention will be given to mainstreaming due consideration for refugees’ and IDPs’ cultural rights into the services that they are offered and benefitting from in camps and host communities. Cultural initiatives to promote mutual understanding between refugees/IDPs and host communities will also be envisaged.

52. Cooperation with the military will be further developed, including with United Nations peace-keeping forces, to enhance knowledge and understanding of international humanitarian law related to the protection of cultural heritage during conflict. UNESCO will build on the positive experience of the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2100 (2013) that established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and requested it to ensure the safeguarding of cultural heritage sites in collaboration with UNESCO. In particular, the integration of a module on the protection of cultural heritage and diversity within the standard training of peace-keeping forces will be proposed. Ultimately, it is hoped that increased awareness of the military on international humanitarian cultural heritage law will lead to the operationalization of “protected cultural areas” in zones of conflict; that is significant cultural heritage sites, which are clearly identified and protected from the conflict based on a mutual agreement between military forces operating in the given area.

53. Building on the achievements of the social media campaign #Unite4Heritage, awareness-raising among the general public, and in particular young people, will be pursued and scaled up.

Communication and outreach material will be developed focusing on the core values of cultural diversity and pluralism, as well as cultural heritage safeguarding to counter propaganda promoting hatred, sectarian agendas and extreme violence.

Implementation and monitoring

54. At the global level, with a view to better responding to emergency situations, UNESCO has established in 2014 a Unit for Emergency Preparedness and Response (CLT/EPR). The unit will ensure the overall coordination of the present strategy for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism during conflict. This unit operates in close coordination with the Secretariats of UNESCO's Conventions, and especially with the 1954, 1970 1972, 2003 Conventions Secretariats, in order to cover all aspects of the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in times of conflict. An underlying objective in establishing the EPR Unit is to improve the coherence of the Sector's response in addressing emergencies and to ensure that adequate attention is given to long-term preparedness and prevention strategies.

55. The Unit also supports UNESCO field offices that are responsible for the design and implementation of capacity-building and technical assistance activities related to emergency preparedness and crisis response in the field of culture, thereby providing technical advice and backstopping. It also ensures overall coordination with stakeholders, drawing on existing global and national mechanisms, including the newly established platform of experts led by UNESCO specifically for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199.

56. Monitoring of UNESCO activities will be undertaken by a variety of mechanisms including quarterly narrative reporting in SISTER and regular reporting to the Executive Board and to the respective Intergovernmental Committees and General Assemblies of culture conventions, as well as by the Bureau of Financial Management. Monitoring mechanisms are designed to provide an early indication of the likelihood that expected results will be attained and provide an opportunity to make necessary changes in programme activities and approaches, as appropriate.

57. In addition to these standard monitoring and evaluation processes, specific monitoring and evaluation plans, including as appropriate detailed monitoring and evaluation frameworks, are established for extrabudgetary projects in order to ensure effective and transparent implementation.

58. During the present biennium, as the scale of impact of conflict on cultural heritage and diversity has reached an unprecedented scale, UNESCO has been called upon by its Member States to strengthen and expand its response. In this context, a range of new initiatives have been developed: global advocacy and coordination efforts (e.g. #Unite4Heritage campaign and global coalition, support to implementation of United Nations Security Resolution 2199, emergency plans for the safeguarding of cultural heritage respectively in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen), improved monitoring and assessment capacity, as well as strengthened capacity development programmes to assist Member States in mitigating the impact of conflict on culture.

59. Such activities are largely funded through extrabudgetary resources. For example, around US \$3 million was raised to support heritage rehabilitation in Mali, with contributions from Switzerland (\$1.1 million); the EU (\$670,000); Norway (\$170,000); and the Netherlands (\$75,000). A €2.6-million project for the safeguarding of the Syrian cultural heritage is ongoing, with contributions from the EU (€2.5 million) and the Government of Flanders (€170,000). The State of Kuwait funded the High-Level International Conference on Cultural Heritage at risk in Iraq and Syria, held at UNESCO in December 2014 (\$100,000). In Iraq, UNESCO mobilized \$1.5 million from Japan, €300,000 from Italy and \$170,000 from Norway, for activities aimed at strengthening the protection of cultural property and build capacities. In Libya, UNESCO assistance in these fields is funded by Italy and the Libyan Government (\$1 million each).

60. In terms of regular programme and budget, human resources fully dedicated to conflict response are limited. At Headquarters, the Unit for Emergency Preparedness and Response consists of one Professional and one General Service staff. In the current biennium, staff of the 1970 and 1954 Conventions, as well as those of the Arab States Unit of the World Heritage Centre have devoted a very significant proportion of their time to such activities. Field offices covering countries facing emergencies related to conflicts, such as Beirut (for Syria), Baghdad, the Project Antenna for Libya, and Bamako, do not have any international CLT staff on regular posts. Regular programme financial resources for operational activities are also limited, and used mostly to support post disaster assessment missions, the elaboration of project proposals or coordination meetings.

61. Within these constraints, particular efforts are being made to strengthen the capacities of the Secretariat of the 1970 Convention, for it to cope with new statutory obligations, in particular the creation of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of Parties in 2013, as well as, the responsibility established by the Security Council in its Resolution 2199, to monitor and assist Member States in the implementation of the prohibition of cross-border trade of cultural objects originating from Iraq and Syria. Indeed, it is proposed to create two junior Professional posts in the draft 38 C/5. It is also proposed to increase the regular programme operational budget for emergencies and activities to counter the illicit trafficking of cultural objects in the Arab States region from 1%, in the 37 C/5 (\$507 million expenditure plan), to 8% in the 38 C/5 (\$518 million expenditure plan) out of the overall budget of the Culture Sector.

62. Moreover, during the present biennium, an amount of \$500,000 was made available from the Emergency Fund to the Culture Sector. These resources are being used to provide support for actions in Yemen, Nepal and Libya, as well as the development of training modules for law enforcement officials on illicit trafficking of cultural property. This amount is also supporting temporary assistance to the 1970 Secretariat to ensure the follow up to UNSC Resolution 2199, as well as temporary assistance to the EPR Unit to assist in coordinating Sector-wide efforts.

63. However, despite these efforts, the human and financial resources dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage affected by conflict remain insufficient for the Organization to respond effectively. Member States of UNESCO and States Parties to UNESCO Cultural Conventions have recognized the need for such additional resources.

64. The High Contracting Parties to the 1954 Hague Convention (2013) have called upon all Parties to “provide voluntary financial support to the Secretariat and the implementation of activities of UNESCO related to the Convention and its 1954 (First) Protocol”; The Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict also acknowledged “the increasing reliance of the Organization on extrabudgetary contributions”; and recommended “to increase the coordination and effectiveness of the Culture Sector’s mobilization of such extrabudgetary resources and diversify the sources of such contributions” (Decision 8.COM 13 (2013));

65. States Parties to the 1970 Convention have recognized “the need to sustainably stabilize and strengthen the secretariat’s human and financial resources so that it can meet States Parties’ expectations and needs more effectively”. MSP 6 (2015) “Invites States Parties and UNESCO to strengthen their support for activities carried out to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention by making financial and/or human resources available”. Resolution 3. MSP 10 “Also invites the UNESCO Director-General to continue to reinforce the Secretariat with appropriate financial resources and, in particular, human resources to continue its emergency action initiatives.” In its Decision 2. SC 3 (2014), the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties of the 1970 Convention also “Takes note of the increase in tasks assigned to the secretariat and of the need to strengthen it in human and financial terms”, and “Encourages the Director-General to ensure the provision of the necessary financial and human resources to the Secretariat for the adequate fulfilment of its tasks”. It further “Calls upon the States Parties to Strengthen the Secretariat with the level of expertise, stability and resources required to respond to the ever-increasing demand for its services” (Decision 2. SC 4 (2014)).

66. In addition, the evaluation of UNESCO's standard-setting work of the Culture Sector (April 2014) conducted by the Internal Oversight Service has analysed and described the current situation as unsustainable, both in terms of human and financial resources. For instance "The Secretariat (...) lacks resources, which has put constraints on the number of nominations and proposals processed and on other activities." (Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector, Part I, Final report, page vi); "The resources allocated to the 1970 Convention do not (...) reflect its priority status, and financial constraints continue to be an impediment to work in support of the 1970 Convention. Additionally, the staffing of the Convention Secretariat has been and currently still is woefully inadequate to effectively serve the Convention. Over the past couple of years the situation has become ever more precarious because of increasing demands on the services of the Secretariat. (idem, Part II, Final report, page ii). "The diminishing resources available to UNESCO will make a direct supervision of the effective implementation of the 1972 Convention in domestic law more difficult." (idem, Part III, Final report, page 46, para. 159). Looking ahead, it is clear that greater efforts and additional support and funding will be necessary, and critical to ensure the implementation of the present strategy.

67. For the present strategy, UNESCO would need additional posts under regular programme resources to institutionalize a sustainable response by UNESCO to conflicts in the field of culture, adding to the modest adjustments put in place within the existing financial framework. It is proposed, therefore, to allocate from the regular programme and budget, through a phased approach, an amount of \$2.5 million, during the whole period of the strategy, i.e. over the next six years, starting from January 2016. These funds would serve to strengthen progressively the coordination capacity at the global level as well as implementation at the country level.

68. Based on UNESCO's experience on the implementation of emergency action plans in times of conflict, an estimated amount of \$25 million, invested in a phased approach over the remaining six years of the 37 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy, is needed to support the implementation of all priority actions in the form of extrabudgetary contributions to the recently established Heritage Emergency Fund.

69. The estimated amount of \$25 million has been identified. However, it will have to be assessed against the unpredictability of emergency situations in the context of armed conflicts that may occur over the next six years. It is estimated that a total amount of \$25 million is needed to effectively develop and implement the priority actions foreseen under the present Strategy during its six-year time-frame. While noting the unpredictable nature of conflicts and of deriving needs and demands on UNESCO to respond, this amount is determined based on the following elements:

- Needs identified in relation to the protection of culture during conflict will remain significantly high over the next six-year period;
- Requests for UNESCO assistance to increase, as the Organization is called upon to scale up and expand its assistance to address, in particular, new challenges of protecting culture during conflict;
- Increase in statutory obligations for UNESCO to emerge as a result of demands for assistance, such as for instance the role of UNESCO in assisting Member States in the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199.

70. It is to be noted that for 2015 the estimated level of expenditure (staff and activities) for the implementation of UNESCO's response to conflict is \$3.349 million, with a ratio of 1/11.5 (between regular programme and extrabudgetary funding). The full funding of the present Strategy would thus represent an increase of 124% on 2015 expenditure over each of the next six years, allowing the Organization to bridge the gaps in response highlighted in the present Strategy.

71. In order to further develop sustainable in-house capacity to protect culture in the event of armed conflict, it is critical to improve the balance between regular budget and extrabudgetary

funding dedicated for this purpose. In this connection, it is proposed to allocate from the regular programme and budget, through a phased approach, an amount of \$5 million (\$2.5 million each for staff and activities), over the next three biennia, starting from January 2016 with adjustments needed in the work plan of the 38 C/5 (cf. decision paragraph 72). This would correspond to 20% of the estimated overall amount (\$25 million) necessary to implement the present strategy over the next three biennia. These funds would serve, in priority, to strengthen the Organization's capacity to implement the Strategy at national level, in affected countries, by creating professional regular programme posts in relevant offices, where there are currently no such positions (cf. para. 59 above). It is also proposed to seek extrabudgetary sources to fund the remaining budget of the Strategy, that is \$20 million. Ideally, extrabudgetary contributions would be made to the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund, to strengthen coherence in the implementation and reporting on the Strategy. It is to be noted that such funds will be used in priority to address urgent needs and issues in relation to the prevention of loss of cultural heritage and diversity at risk before, during and in the immediate aftermath of conflict.

Proposed decision

72. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Takes note of the report submitted on the activities undertaken by UNESCO concerning the protection of cultural property during armed conflicts;
2. Welcomes the progress made in implementing the relevant paragraphs of 196 EX/Decision 29, and notably the establishment of the global coalition “#Unite4Heritage”, as well as the actions taken by UNESCO and its partners on the ground;
3. Endorses the strategy to reinforce UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict;
4. Requests the Secretariat to revise the strategy based on the views expressed at the 197th session of the Executive Board, as appropriate;
5. Invites Member States to support the implementation of the strategy, including through contributions towards the Heritage Emergency Fund recently established by UNESCO;
6. Decides to transmit the revised strategy, for discussion and adoption, to the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 2015;
7. Invites the Director-General to integrate the provisions of the Strategy among the priorities for the 39 C/5, to be presented to the Executive Board at its 200th session in the fall of 2016.