



Third Meeting of Islamic World Heritage Committee

Final report

Tunis, Tunisian Republic: 27-29 November 2012

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

As part of furthering its efforts to preserve the civilizational heritage of the Member States and enable the Islamic World Heritage Committee to carry out its mission in the best conditions, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), held the third meeting of the Islamic World Heritage Committee, in Tunis, on 27-29 November 2012, under the aegis of Dr Mahdi Mabrouk, the Tunisian Minister of Culture and Heritage Preservation, and in collaboration with the National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, and the National Institute of Heritage. The meeting was devoted to reviewing the Committee's documents, Rules of Procedure, and inscription form, in light of the current challenges facing heritage in the Islamic world, discussing the proposed amendments, examining Member States' tentative lists of cultural and natural sites, and exploring the possibility of their inscription on the Islamic World Heritage List for 2012. It was also dedicated to assessing the current situation of the human heritage in the Islamic world, determining the endangered sites and exploring ways for their protection.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the Member States represented in the Islamic World Heritage Committee, namely the Tunisian Republic, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Senegal, the Republic of Niger and the Islamic Republic of Iran, in addition to the representatives of ISESCO, the Tunisian Ministry of Culture, the National Institute of Heritage and the Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture.

Opening session:

The opening session of the Islamic World Heritage Committee's third meeting started Tuesday morning 27 November 2012 with an address by Mr Mohamed ben Abdellah, Assistant Secretary General of the Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, in which he welcomed the participants and expressed his thanks to and appreciation of Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, ISESCO Director General, for his efforts and for his choice of the Tunisian Republic to hold this important meeting. He also pointed out to the fruitful cooperation between the Tunisian National Commission and ISESCO over the past years.

For his part, Dr Abdel Aziz Salah, ISESCO representative, conveyed the greetings of ISESCO Director General to the participants and underlined the importance of the meeting, which was devoted to examining the proposed amendments to the Committee's documents, studying the Member States' tentative lists of cultural and natural sites and exploring the possibility of their

inscription on the Islamic World Heritage List for this year, in line with the inscription measures. In the same vein, he underscored the important role carried out by the Committee to preserve the Islamic heritage.

Likewise, Dr Adnane Al Wahichi, the Director of the National Institute of Heritage, read out the address of Dr Mahdi Mabrouk, the Minister of Culture and Heritage Preservation of the Tunisian Republic, in which he underlined the leading role of the Committee in preserving heritage in the Islamic world, highlighted the importance of determining the Committee's areas of competence, especially with the existence of other competent committees, and pointed out to the hazards faced by the heritage in Syria, Tunisia, Mali and other countries; which impels the Committee to schedule urgent programs and activities to preserve the human heritage for the future generations.

After the close of the opening session, the working sessions commenced as was scheduled, in line with the following two axes:

I. Studying and adopting the proposed amendments to the Committee's documents

After studying the Committee's documents, and discussing the proposed amendments to the Committee's name, inscription form and Rules of Procedure, deliberations took place and then the participants decided the following:

- To change the name of the committee from “The Islamic Heritage Committee” to “The Islamic World Heritage Committee”.
- To increase the number of the Committee's members to 9, at a rate of 3 members from the Arab region, 3 members from the African region and 3 members from the Asian region; instead of 6 members, at a rate of 2 members from each region.
- To revise and amend the Committee's documents.
- To add an independent form to inscribe the intangible heritage in the Islamic world.
- To underline the necessity of the attendance of a representative of the applicant state during the Committee's yearly session to present and follow up his state's application.

II. Studying and approving the applications of the Member States:

After examining the applications of the Member States, the Committee decided the following:

- To inscribe al-Quds al-Sharif on top of the Islamic World Heritage List.
- To inscribe Deir al-Ahmar, in Sohag, the Arab Republic of Egypt on the Islamic World Heritage List.
- To postpone the inscription of the Abbasid Marub Castle in Qatar, **until fulfillment of inscription standards.**
- To suspend the inscription of Rusafa and Khirbat as-Sayar in the Syrian Arab Republic.
- To postpone the inscription of Ajloun Castle in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, **until fulfillment of inscription standards.**
- To postpone the inscription of the sites proposed by the Republic of Iraq, **until fulfillment of inscription standards.**
- To postpone the inscription of Tinmel Mosque in the Kingdom of Morocco, **until fulfillment of inscription standards.**
- To postpone the inscription of Kadhima site in Kuwait, **until fulfillment of inscription standards.**
- To postpone the inscription of the sites proposed by the Asian and African Member States, **until fulfillment of inscription standards.**

The Committee also made the following recommendations:

- Approving the inscription of the cultural and natural sites proposed by ISESCO Member States on the Islamic World Heritage List if those sites are already inscribed on the World Heritage List, upon a request from the concerned Member State, and inviting that Member State to provide the Committee with all the information, images, maps, documents and electronic copy of the application.
- Inviting ISESCO to urge the donors to provide the necessary financial support to save Bandigara Mosque in Mali, and prompt the Malian competent authorities to submit the application to inscribe it on the Islamic World Heritage List.
- Inviting UNESCO to bear its share of responsibility for protecting heritage, considering that it is the party responsible for protecting historical and civilizational sites and preserving the common human heritage; and calling upon it to take all the necessary measures to give substance to the Heritage Protection Agreement as well as to the resolutions of the World Heritage

Committee about the protection of endangered heritage, in order to save heritage in Syria, Mali and other countries, with endangered heritage.

- Condemning the continuous bombing of historical sites in Syria, and calling upon all factions to immediately cease bombing of the surrounding area of historical cities, old markets and historical landmarks, which is considered a blatant violation of international agreements.
- Denouncing the attacks on heritage in Mali, and calling on all factions to take the necessary measures to protect the religious and historical landmarks.
- Calling upon the Member States to continue submitting applications to inscribe their heritage on the Islamic World Heritage List, and coordinate with the Islamic World Heritage Committee.
- Calling upon the rich Member States to help the Member States that need help to document their civilizational heritage and inscribe it on the Islamic World Heritage List.
- Providing patronage to the extraordinary meeting on reviewing the international agreements on the preservation of heritage in light of the hazards it faces, which the Ministry of Antiquities of the Arab Republic of Egypt will hold in 2013.

At the close of the meeting, the attendees lauded ISESCO's efforts in preserving and protecting heritage in the Member States, through its keenness to activate the Islamic World Heritage Committee, and invited it to continue exerting its efforts to promote Islamic joint action to preserve the Islamic identity.

They also extended thanks to the Tunisian Republic, represented by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage Preservation, the National Institute of Heritage, and to the Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture for kindly hosting the Third Meeting of the Islamic World Heritage Committee.