



Sixth Meeting of the Islamic World Heritage Committee  
ISESCO Headquarters - Rabat  
26-27 October 2015

## **Final Report**

As part of its sustained efforts devoted to the protection of the Islamic cultural heritage in the member States, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) held the sixth meeting of the Islamic World Heritage Committee (IWHC), in its headquarters, on 26-27 October 2015. Taking part in the meeting were the representatives of the following IWHC member States: the Republic of Yemen as Chair, the Republic of the Sudan as Rapporteur, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Malaysia, Mali, Guinea and the Union of Comoros, in addition to the representatives of the Scientific Commission for the Kingdom of Morocco and the State of Palestine.

The opening of the meeting started with recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, followed by the address of ISESCO which was delivered by the Organization's Director of Culture and Communication, Dr Ahmed Said Ould Bah, on behalf of H.E. ISESCO Director General, Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, in which he conveyed the greetings of His Excellency and his wishes for success to the meeting. Dr Ould Bah stressed the important role of the IWHC in the protection of historical and cultural monuments, and invited the Committee members to find ways to devote more concerted efforts to protecting the Islamic heritage everywhere. At the close of his address, Mr Ould Bah reviewed the programme for the first and second days of the meeting, in addition to that of the joint meeting to be held on the third day with some officials from UNESCO and experts from the World Heritage Committee within the framework of the global coalition for heritage protection (Unite4Heritage), to be co-held by ISESCO and UNESCO on 28 October 2015, at ISESCO headquarters.

In his opening address, the Chairperson of the Committee, Dr Naji Thawaba, extended his sincere thanks to ISESCO and to its Director General for the efforts put in the organization of the meeting, underscoring the pivotal role ISESCO plays at the regional and international levels in terms of the protection and preservation of the civilizational heritage of Muslim peoples. In the same vein, he noted the Committee's keen interest in addressing the challenges associated with the context of the protection and preservation of heritage in many member States, and stressed the need for intensifying joint efforts to protect the Islamic world's heritage against destruction.

At the close of his address, Dr Thawaba welcomed the Committee members, inviting them to make every effort to develop the Committee's performance to match expectations and aspirations and give the Islamic world's heritage the necessary attention and care it deserves.

At the close of its deliberations, the Committee issued the following recommendations:

## **I. Concerning ISESCO's efforts devoted to heritage protection:**

- Thanking ISESCO and its Director General for the continued support and efforts for the cause of protecting the Islamic world heritage.
- Urging ISESCO to devote more efforts to the training and building of capacities of technical staff specialized in the inscription of heritage on the respective heritage lists of ISESCO and UNESCO.
- Enlightening the Organization's member States, particularly those sitting on the IWHC, on ISESCO's activities and achievements in terms of heritage protection and supporting the Organization's action in this connection.

## **II. Concerning the technical report on the recent Israeli violations in the vicinity of Al-Aqsa Mosque:**

- Adopting the new report and updating the overall report which records violations, inviting ISESCO to submit the report to international bodies and organizations concerned, and commending the efforts made to preserve Al-Aqsa mosque and its architecture.
- Increasing the awareness of communities in the member States of the importance of Al-Aqsa Mosque in preserving the Islamic identity, especially in African countries, through the establishment of university chairs on Al-Quds and Palestine and their history and Islamic civilizational heritage.
- Revising the annual frequency of the report and considering the possibility of updating the report on a quarterly or biannual basis, and taking the necessary measures in this connection.
- Establishing a field observatory to monitor and follow up violations against heritage and architectural monuments around Al-Aqsa Mosque.
- Preparing heritage-focused and tourist-oriented guides and maps of Al-Quds Al-Sharif that feature the Holy City's Arab names and historical data.
- Integrating a legal expert into the Scientific Commission, with as mission to provide advice on the executive steps of the initiatives and projects proposed or adopted by the Committee.

### **III. Concerning the status of Cordoba's Grand Mosque:**

- Emphasizing the Islamic identity of the Mosque, and continuing coordination and consultation with the international bodies and organizations concerned, as well as with the relevant Spanish authorities in the effort to take the necessary measures to protect the mosque and to preserve its Islamic identity.
- Calling for the preparation of a legal framework to prevent the repetition of such actions with regard to heritage sites based outside the Islamic world.

### **IV. Concerning nomination for inscription on the Islamic World Heritage List:**

- Adopting the new amended nomination form for inscription on the list of the tangible and natural heritage of the Islamic world
- Continuing coordination and consultation with the competent parties in the member States to ensure the use of the form in an accurate way defining the conditions, criteria and mechanisms for site nomination.
- Maintaining technical support for member States to evaluate their nominations for inscription on the World Heritage List.
- Proposing for ISESCO emblem to be placed on the Islamic world heritage sites that are inscribed.

### **V. Concerning the IWHC's fields of action:**

- Supporting ISESCO Director General's positions calling for countering the attempts to destroy the Islamic cultural heritage and obliterate its Islamic identity.
- Suggesting that ISESCO provide support for the restoration and maintenance of one heritage site in Yemen, Palestine and Guinea respectively.
- Inviting ISESCO to consider holding a Donors' Conference for the restoration and maintenance of heritage sites affected by armed conflicts and wars.
- Emphasizing Islam's approach which calls for populating the Earth and preserving universal heritage, and rejects corruption and destruction on Earth; condemning the destruction of the heritage, civilizational and human landmarks in many parts of the Islamic world; and calling for all measures necessary for their protection and preservation.
- Stressing the need for exchanging progress reports between the Committee and its Secretariat at ISESCO so as to ensure follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations and include the latest developments on the ground in the agenda of the Committee's next meeting.

- Suggesting holding the next meeting of the Committee at ISESCO headquarters in October 2016, unless a member State offers to host it.
- Valuing ISESCO Director General's call for enlarging the scope of the mission of peace-keeping forces to include the protection of heritage; and calling for the Director General's call to be affirmed and examined together with UNESCO so as to integrate it into the legal framework for the protection of civilizational heritage during armed conflicts.