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Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

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# 192 EX/11

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## **JERUSALEM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 36 C/RESOLUTION 43 AND 191 EX/DECISION 9**

### **SUMMARY**

This document is submitted pursuant to 191 EX/Decision 9, in which the examination of this item at the 192nd session of the Executive Board was requested.

The document reports on the implementation of ongoing projects in the Old City of Jerusalem, mainly financed through voluntary extra budgetary contributions.

The Report by the Director-General on the implementation of 191 EX/Decision 5 (I) related to the Ascent to the Mughrabi Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem is submitted in document 192 EX/5.

No decision is proposed in this document.

1. As indicated in the previous documents on this item, only one project, concerning the conservation of the church of St John Prodromos, is being funded by the Leventis Foundation of Cyprus under the Action Plan for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem (2007). However, the funds provided have proven insufficient for the execution in its entirety of the restoration project, which has not been completed, and UNESCO is still seeking additional resources to that end.
2. The third phase of the project for the establishment of the Centre for the Restoration of Manuscripts of the Haram al-Sharif, funded by Norway, began in September 2011 and is making satisfactory progress. Five new employees have been recruited and five sessions of courses on conservation and restoration techniques have already been held. The Centre has been provided with the necessary equipment and study tours abroad are being organized for the restoration centres' staff.
3. Under the "Safeguarding, Refurbishment and Revitalization of the Islamic Museum of the Haram al-Sharif and its Collection" project funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the premises of the Islamic Museum have been repaired and the necessary equipment has been purchased. Permanent staff members recruited by the Jordanian authorities have been trained in conservation and museum management. The works of art are being restored and the photographs inventory is almost complete. The Director of the Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, chosen by UNESCO as coordinator, has proposed a plan of action and is currently working on the scientific design of the museum.

4. During the discussions at the 190th session of the Executive Board, Member States voiced concern at the lack of progress in the implementation of the Executive Board's decisions on the mission to the Old City of Jerusalem. A meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board, convened by the Chairperson to discuss the implementation of UNESCO's decisions concerning the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem, was held on 7 and 8 March 2013. The Executive Board invited the Director-General to pursue her active efforts to dispatch the aforementioned mission. At its 191st session, the Executive Board, in 191 EX/Decision 9, adopted by consensus, acknowledged "the Director-General's good offices mission to lead to an understanding between all concerned parties and to the implementation of resolution 34 COM 7A.20 (Brasilia consensus resolution)". In a letter dated 22 April 2013, forwarding to the Director-General the text of its statement to be made to the Executive Board on 23 April, the Permanent Delegation of Israel to UNESCO confirmed its assent to a reactive monitoring mission by the World Heritage Centre, ICCROM and ICOMOS in May 2013.

5. The mission was scheduled for 20 to 25 May 2013 but has still not taken place because the parties concerned disagreed about its terms of reference. A joint letter from the Permanent Delegations of Jordan and Palestine was sent to the Chairperson of the Executive Board on 24 May 2013, expressing their disappointment over the disagreement and, on 28 May, the Permanent Delegate of Israel sent to the Permanent Delegations a *note verbale* and a press review explaining the Israeli authorities' decision to postpone the mission to a later date once for as long as there was no agreement on the aforesaid mission's terms of reference. The Director-General, too, expressed her regrets to the parties concerned in a letter dated 31 May 2013, to which the Permanent Delegation of Israel replied on the same day, reiterating its position concerning the terms of reference. The Permanent Delegations of Jordan and Palestine published a declaration on 3 June 2013, which was deplored by the Permanent Delegation of Israel on the same day.

6. During the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 17-27 June 2013), Decision 37 COM 7A.26 on the state of conservation of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, was adopted following a roll-call vote,<sup>1</sup> deploring *inter alia* that the mission had not taken place. Furthermore, the decision requested Israeli authorities to halt archaeological excavations and to desist from implementing projects planned in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, in particular the cable car system, the visitors' centre on the Givati parking lot and building projects in the Western Wall Plaza. After the World Heritage Committee had adopted the decision following a roll-call vote, the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee proposed that the Committee adopt a declaration addressed to the Executive Board of UNESCO requesting it to renew its efforts to achieve a consensus among the parties concerned so that the mission might be dispatched to the Old City of Jerusalem. The Committee adopted the declaration. At the end of the Committee's session and in the context of the special session of the Executive Board on 4 July 2013, communiqués were issued by the Permanent Delegations of Jordan and Palestine on 23 June and were followed by a statement by the Permanent Delegation of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group. The Permanent Delegation of Israel issued another *note verbale* on 8 July 2013, reiterating its objections while asserting the Israeli authorities' readiness to implement the consensual decisions of the Executive Board.

7. Should additional information become available to the Secretariat, the Director-General is prepared to publish an addendum to this document before the 192nd session of the Executive Board in order to inform the Members of the Executive Board of any new developments in that regard.

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<sup>1</sup> 10 votes in favour, 3 votes against and 8 abstentions.