

## **Motivation**

Syria is home to some of the oldest, most advanced civilisations in the world. Located at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, the land that would become modern Syria faced the rise of the great Southern empires. In the present crisis that ancient legacy is constantly under threat. All the 6 World Heritage sites on Syrian soil have already been damaged. The destruction of archaeological sites, monuments and cultural collections is immense and perhaps the worst in the world since the Second World War.

The world has seen the heart-breaking suffering of the Syrian people and the extensive destruction of the cultural heritage since the conflict began. This heritage is all about people, and it is with people that all discussions of heritage must start and end. It can provide a common ground for dialogue and therefore is a tool for peace building. Through heritage the Syrian people have a foundation on which to build their future. That is why the 'past' needs to be protected in the 'present' to have a chance to build a 'future'

# **Santander Declaration** *On the Protection of Syria's Heritage*

Santander, April 25 2014

*In view of the massive destruction of Syria's rich cultural heritage during the present crisis the participants of the International Conference 'Heritage and Conflict. Lessons to Safeguard Syrian Heritage' gathered at Santander, Spain on April 23-25 2014 agree*

that Syria's heritage:

1. is of universal value transcending its national importance
2. is of the utmost importance for the future of the country and its citizens in general and for identity building in particular
3. is a common ground for dialogue and therefore is a tool for peace building
4. and that the destruction thereof is a crime

there is a need to:

5. respect international law concerning the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict
6. respect the cultural diversity inherent in Syrian heritage

7. make a conscious effort to safeguard and protect all cultural heritage irrespective of its religious or ethnic affiliations
8. protect the already defaced cultural heritage from further damage
9. do all in their power to stop the illegal digging and illegal construction on archaeological sites
10. respect international law to prevent the illegal trade and transfer of ownership of cultural property

They therefore

*Invite* the governments, multilateral and international organisations, civil society organisations and especially the national and international heritage communities to

1. affirm the role cultural heritage can play in enhancing the peace process
2. support and assist the parties to realize their efforts to safeguard and protect the cultural heritage of Syria

*Call* upon the governments, especially those of the Syria's neighbouring countries, to do their utmost to stop the illegal trade in Syrian artefacts.

# Outcomes

## *of the International Conference 'Heritage and Conflict'*

Santander, April 25 2014

*The participants of the International Conference 'Heritage and Conflict. Lessons to Safeguard Syrian Heritage' gathered at Santander, Spain on April 23-25 2014 agree*

to work together and coordinate their actions:

1. to further develop and maintain the Global Syrian Archaeological Sites and Monuments database and for that matter
  - a. use one protocol to report and record the data for all users
    - i. if necessary train the use of such a protocol
    - ii. pay special attention to the use of one uniform damage assessment form that can be used for other projects as well
2. to create a register of 'Who is Who' in Syrian heritage expertise
3. to continue to publish the International Responses as reported by Silvia Perini and Emma Cunliffe in association with *Heritage for Peace* in April 2014 and for that matter
  - a. a special webpage will be developed on the *Heritage for Peace* website
4. to make available appropriate Manuals and Guidelines on the *Heritage for Peace* website in order to
  - a. stimulate the uniform use of training materials for all stakeholders
  - b. promote the use of international standards
5. to make a case for the use of Cultural Heritage as a tool for Peacebuilding and Peace Settlement Accords and for that matter to
  - a. produce of tentative list of arguments
6. to raise awareness of the tenacious destruction of all sectors of Syria's cultural heritage both inside Syria and outside Syria
7. to stimulate and support the creation of local Emergency Teams and for that matter to
  - a. advise all national and international stakeholders to coordinate their actions with the local Emergency Teams