

# **KYIV STATEMENT ON THE PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS PROPERTIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF *THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION***

1. The main objective of the Kyiv Seminar 2010 on the Role of Religious Communities in the Management of World Heritage Properties was to explore ways of establishing a dialogue between all stakeholders, and to explore possible ways of encouraging and generating mutual understanding and collaboration amongst them in the protection of religious World Heritage properties.
2. The stakeholders would include religious communities, which can comprise believers, traditional and indigenous peoples, as well as States Party authorities, professionals and experts in relevant fields, property owners, funding bodies and other interested partners.
3. The participants of the Seminar welcomed the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, as a valuable tool for the mutual exchange of experiences and dialogue between cultures aiming to foster respect for each other's beliefs.

They furthermore:

4. Recognized the role played by religious communities in the creation, maintenance, and continuous shaping of sacred places, and the custodial role played by them in caring for these as living heritage.
5. Reaffirmed the vital further role of religious communities in conveying, expressing and sustaining spiritual identity, meaning and purpose to human life, considering that these offer significant opportunities in a fast developing and globalizing world, as well as presenting serious challenges.
6. Stressed that culturally and environmentally sustainable management of such heritage should be the responsibility of all stakeholders concerned, and that mutual acceptance and respect will bring different and complementary perspectives to shared cultural and spiritual values.
7. Recalled that the protection of religious heritage represents a special challenge and opportunity that needs to be addressed in the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and noted that living religious places have often been placed on UNESCO's World Heritage

List specifically for their religious and spiritual significance; in other cases, religious properties and sacred places can be an integral part of larger ensembles, such as historic cities, cultural landscapes and natural sites. The significance of such sites and the interests of associated religious communities should be duly recognized in sustainable management processes.

8. Emphasized that the continuing nature of religious heritage calls for dialogue and mutual understanding between the religious communities concerned and all other stakeholders, who must work together to preserve the significance of cultural, mixed and natural heritage sites associated with the sacred.
9. Considered it particularly timely to define an Integrated Strategy for the development of a World Heritage Thematic Programme on religious heritage in collaboration and close coordination between all stakeholders, and that this Programme should create an action plan for the protection of religious heritage world-wide aimed at enhancing the role of communities and the avoidance of misunderstandings, tensions, or stereotypes.
10. Recognized the need to raise awareness of all stakeholders of the importance of the management of religious places in order to enable mutual understanding and acceptance of the World Heritage significance and specificity of each heritage place, and its associated spiritual and religious values.
11. In furtherance of this, and taking into account the resolution 17 GA 9 of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, they called for the establishment of integrated and interactive training programmes in the management of religious places in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN, aimed at helping representatives of religious communities to enhance and share their managerial skills.
12. Concluded that safeguarding religious heritage of outstanding universal value for future generations requires new forms of action, and that the Kyiv seminar formed the start of a new ongoing process, and an opportunity to establish a platform for dialogue and shared knowledge among all communities involved in the preservation of our common heritage.

Kyiv, 5 November 2010