United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

Arab Regional Centre for
World Heritage (ARC-WH)
under the auspices of UNESCO

المركز الإقليمي العربي
للتراث العالمي
تحت رعاية اليونسكو

ARAB REGIONAL CENTRE FOR WORLD HERITAGE (ARC-WH) – BAHRAIN

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

At-Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah, Saudi Arabia
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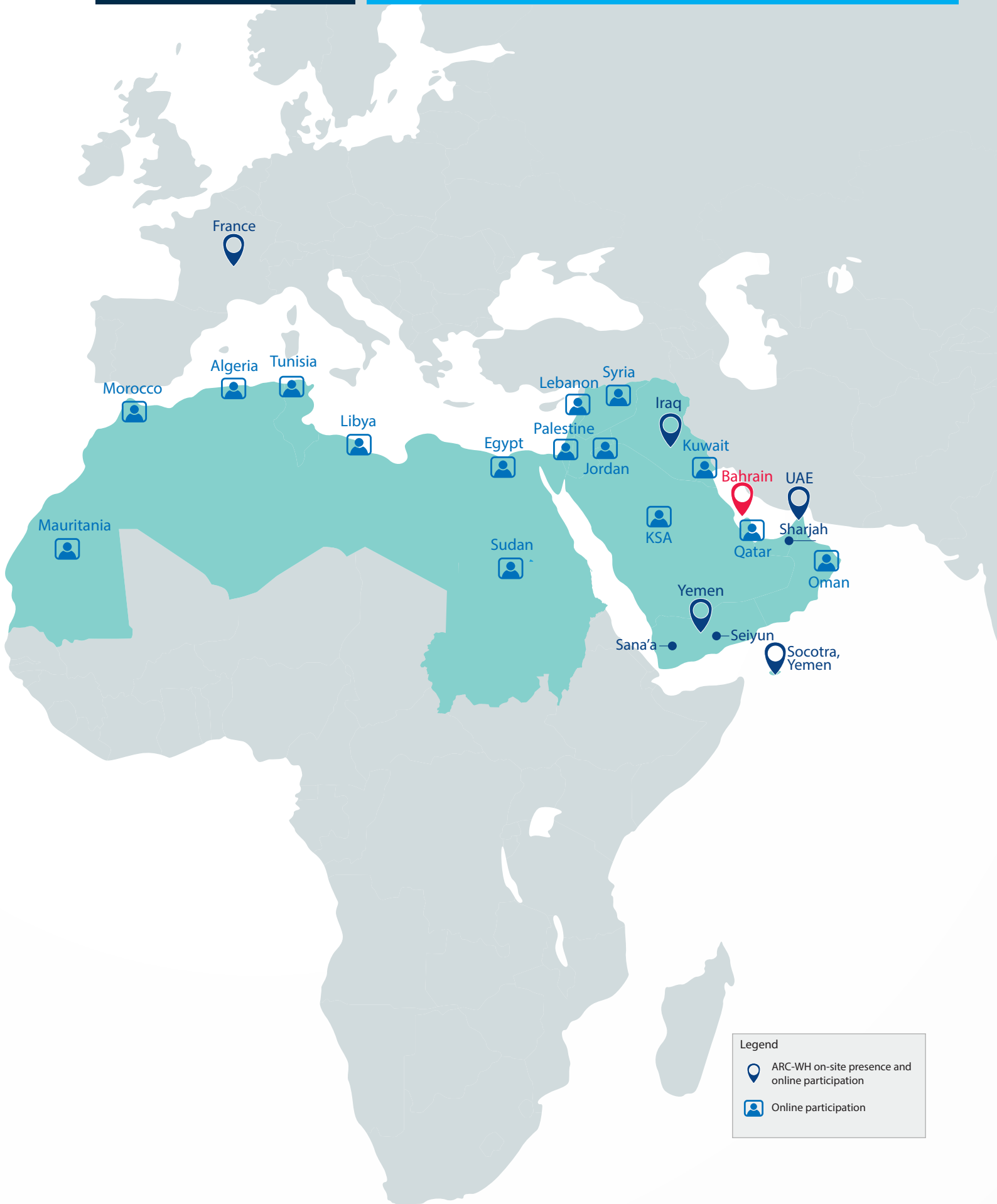
ANNUAL REPORT 2020

ARC-WH ACTIVITIES IN 2020



Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls.
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“During 2020, ARC-WH continued its efforts to support the international campaign to safeguard Beirut’s cultural and architectural heritage in the wake of the tragic blast that trafficaly occurred in August. ”

Pearling, Testimony of an Island Economy, Bahrain
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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

SHEIKHA MAI BINT MOHAMMED AL-KHALIFA

Despite the impacts of COVID-19 on the cultural sectors across the world, the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) continued to implement and follow up on projects aimed at protecting the cultural heritage of the Arab world through its digital platforms. I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to the Government of Bahrain, which has been a great supporter of ARC-WH since its establishment in 2012. I would also express my sincere appreciation for the support of our main partner, UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre (WHC) thathas been instrumental in enabling ARC-WH in the successful implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention towards the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage in the Arab region.

In 2020, ARC-WH implemented various programmes and activities to support the Arab States. During July, ARC-WH, in cooperation with ICOMOS, organized an online international experts meeting on gap analysis study of World Heritage Sites in the Arab region. ARC-WH also held an online meeting in August on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab region, in cooperation with WHC.

In December, ARC-WH organized a virtual regional meeting on its role and vision to support the efforts of Arab countries in preserving heritage, in which participants were given detailed information on the Arab Regional Centre's work and its role in implementing the World Heritage Convention in the Arab region, as well as fostering communication and coordination with the permanent Arab delegations to UNESCO.

ARC-WH also drafted the action plan of the second phase of a project to support the World Heritage Site of Socotra Archipelago in Yemen after the conclusion of the first phase of the project, which is funded by UNESCO's World Heritage Fund in the form of emergency aid following extensive damage caused by three cyclones in 2015.

During 2020, ARC-WH continued its efforts to support the international campaign to safeguard Beirut's cultural and architectural heritage in the wake of the tragic blast that trafficaly occurred in August. The Arab Regional Centre participated in many UNESCO initiatives, including efforts to secure and support Beirut National Museum, and to provide technical assistance and advice to restore the architectural heritage in the historical city of Beirut. Following the decision to postpone the Conference on integrated post-disaster reconstruction of cultural heritage – social, economic and psychological aspects of recovery, the Centre worked to implement a study on the reconstruction of cultural heritage sites after armed conflicts.

With regard to publications and scientific research on international heritage sites, the Centre is working on a number of publications and books, such as "World Heritage Cities in the Arab Region", and the second edition of "World Heritage of the Arab States Book", as well as the TABE'A III Report, which examines the latest developments in natural heritage sites in the Arab region. ARC-WH also sought to strengthen its presence in the digital world by modernizing its electronic library, which includes various studies in the field of international cultural and natural heritage and archaeological sites around the world.

Finally, we trust that ARC-WH will continue its efforts next year to further implement its strategy to preserve our cultural and natural heritage in the Arab world despite the challenges our countries face due to the global pandemic, an end to which we hope to see soon.

Mai bint Mohammed Al-Khalifa

Chairperson of the Governing Board
Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage

INTRODUCTION BY THE DIRECTOR

DR. SHADIA TOUQAN

The Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, like many institutions, faced many challenges in 2020 and had to adapt to extremely difficult circumstances and restrictions to enable the implementation of its planned activities and programmes that were planned and endorsed by the GB which met only few days before the nature and extent of the global pandemic were realized.

Despite these difficulties and unprecedented working conditions, the year 2020 was one of the busiest years for ARC-WH. Soon after the initial needed adjustment under the new working conditions, the ARC-WH team, like most teams and institutions worldwide, worked mainly from home and started communicating internally and with main partners through virtual meetings to decide on rescheduling and reorganizing many of the planned activities that were postponed adapting them to the available time, tools and means of communication. New timelines were soon agreed, and work began in earnest to start the implementation of the already planned and agreed commitments. The perseverance and dedication by the team in face of the challenges ensured the fulfillment of its original Action Plan based on its mandate as a Category 2 Centre including continued activities and programmes from previous years and long-term commitments of ongoing programmes. Coordination and consultation with the World Heritage Centre particularly with the Arab Unit as well as Advisory Bodies and other partners ensured the flexibility and creativity in ensuring the completion and success of the planned objectives.

One of the highlights of the achieved objectives during most of 2020 was organizing the joint two-day online meeting with the AB Unit of the WHC of the 3rd Cycle of the Periodic Reporting in the Arab Region in consultation with focal points and officials in Arab State Parties for the preparation of the regional Action Plan to address the priorities in the Arab Region that should be presented to the next WH Committee session. An expert Meeting was also jointly organized with ICOMOS to implement the final meeting for the "Gap Analysis Study" which aims to identify the potential of the Arab Region for a more balanced representation on the World Heritage List and examine the institutional and legal structures in the region relevant to the heritage sites. The meeting that was originally planned at ARC-WH in Bahrain was replaced by a 3-day online meeting attended by WHC and advisory bodies, international experts and representatives from Arab States and experts. The final report of the two-year study will be finalized early 2021and translated into Arabic.

Other highlights of the implemented activities included, participation in shareourheritage campaign launched by WHC within the early months of the pandemic, preparation for the publication of an update of World Heritage of the Arab States Book, launch of ARC-WH E-Library in addition to participation in a number of partners meetings such as the AFHW Board meeting, ALECSO online conference on Archeology and Cultural Heritage in the Arab World in times of crises and ICCROM/ ATHAR workshop on mechanisms and concepts of the World Heritage Convention and Risk Management. In cooperation with UNESCO WHC, ARC-WH also organized online meeting on World Heritage in Danger in the Arab Region, Processes and Actions in Support World Heritage Sites in Danger. Additionally, the team organized and participated in a few webinars/meetings on reconstruction and recovery. In the aftermath of the devastating blast in Beirut in August, ARC-WH participated in UNESCO Coordination Meetings and campaign for Emergency Response in Beirut and contributing to the rehabilitation of cultural heritage in the historic quarters

As part of ARC-WH commitment to pursue projects and programmes to protect natural heritage sites, the team continued the implementation of Phase II of the International Emergency Assistance project entitled "Mitigation of the Hurricane Impacts on Endemic threatened plants of Soqutra Archipelago" WH Fund. A workshop on Integrating Cultural Heritage into conservation and developments planning in Soqutra was carried out at the start of 2020 as well as a follow up meeting for Contribution to the Man and Biosphere. Furthermore,

"As part of ARC-WH commitment to pursue projects and programmes to protect natural heritage sites, the team continued the implementation of Phase II of the International Emergency Assistance project entitled "Mitigation of the Hurricane Impacts on Endemic threatened plants of Soqutra Archipelago" WH Fund."

a comprehensive field study and research on Hawar Island was launched in 2020 and should be completed in 2021. Upon the completion of Tabe'a III Report: Social and Political changes and its impact on WH Sites. The report is finalized for publication in partnership with IUCN. n 2020, ARC-WH launched a Study for Needs Assessment for natural sites representation and priorities in the Arab Region.

This year's Report highlights some of ARC-WH main activities and programmes within the main components of its Action Plan. Capacity Building and training are considered the cornerstone of its mission, which covered the provision of technical and financial support to officials and professionals from State Parties in their efforts to prepare, identify new sites for nomination for the WH List as well as improve the protection and management of the sites already inscribed on WH List. The team ensured that while strengthening capacities of professionals in the Arab countries there was special focus on sites on the danger List particularly damage to sites in areas under arm conflict. The closer consultation and coordination with its main partners all through the pandemic ARC-WH Team strengthened and enhanced it alliance with WHC, Advisory Bodies, State Parties and partners to ensure achieving shared objectives and goals for protecting the cultural and natural heritage in the Arab Region, by promoting the implementation of the World Heritage 1972 Convention, among Arab State Parties.

In 2021 and the coming years, the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage will endeavor to fulfill its obligations under its Mandate as a C2C; upholding the principles and values of the 1972 Convention for World Heritage, developing the knowledge and skills of professionals in Arab State Parties for better protection of their natural and cultural heritage, while expanding its studies, research, and outreach to contribute to the improvement of representation of heritage sites in the Arab region in the world heritage list.

The ability of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage to realise and accomplish its original objectives as projected in its 2020 Action Plan, despite the difficulties and limitations imposed by the pandemic, would not have been achieved without the continued guidance, inspiration and backing from H.E Sheikha Mai Al-Khalifa. The management and team of ARC-WH also sincerely appreciate and value WHC and all members of the Governing Board for their continued support and encouragement.

Dr. Shadia Touqan

Director of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage

BACKGROUND

The Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) is a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO that was established in 2012 as an autonomous and independent legal entity at the service of Arab States Parties to strengthen the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Based in the Kingdom of Bahrain, ARC-WH is a non-profit organisation that assists the Arab States towards the conservation, management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage, and acts as a relay to the World Heritage Centre in the Arab region.

Petra, Jordan
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ARC-WH

OUR MISSION

To strengthen the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Arab States by providing information, knowledge, and advice to Member States and facilitating coordination and cooperation among stakeholders at the international, national and local levels for the benefit of World Heritage sites in the region.

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN THE ARAB REGION

86 SITES

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the representation of the Arab States properties on the World Heritage List.
- Create a network of local and regional experts in the region.
- Mobilise regional and international financial support for the preservation of properties.
- Increase and promote awareness of World Heritage in Arab region.
- Disseminate information, initiatives and programmes concerned with the World Heritage Convention.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: THE FIVE CS

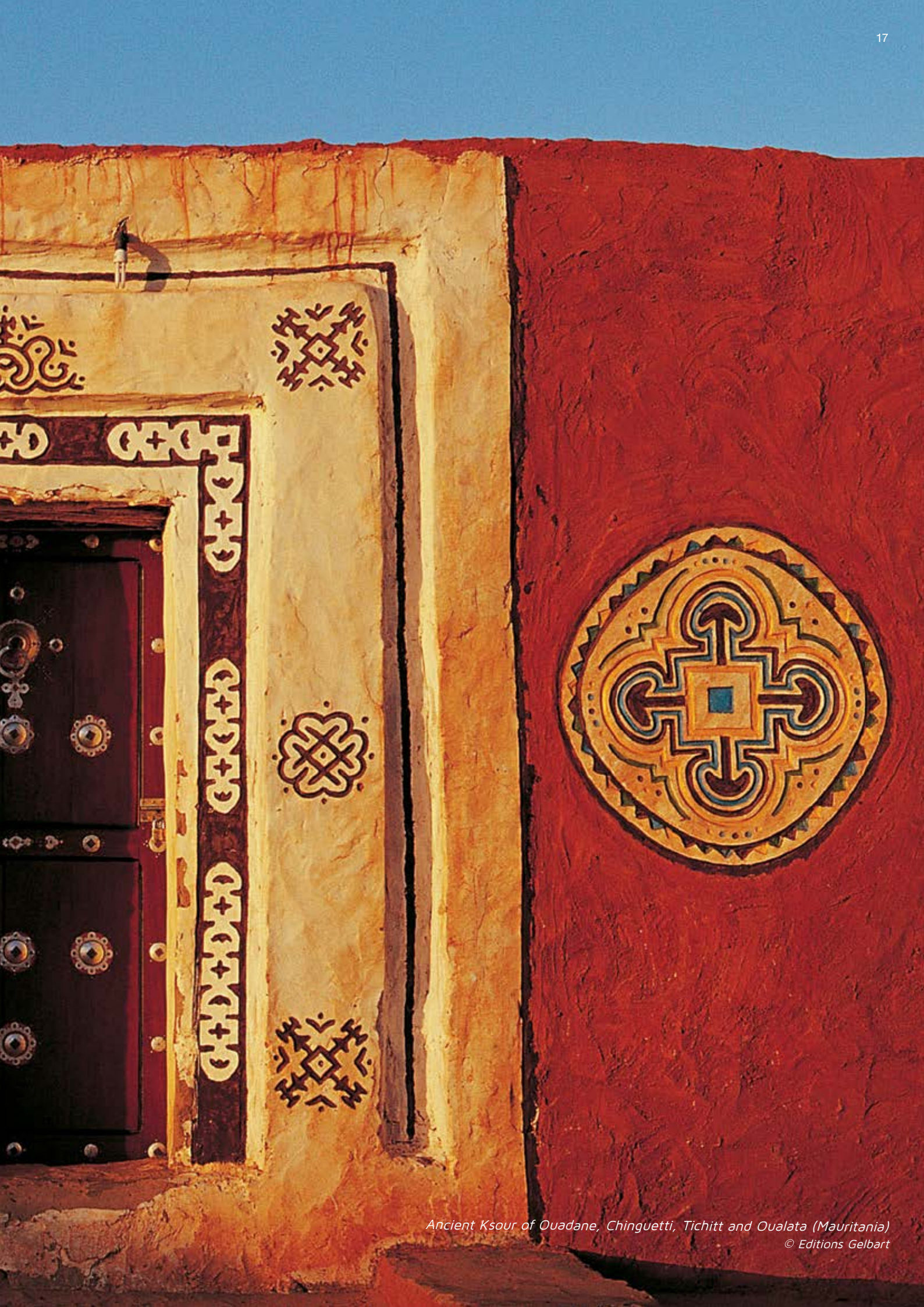
To maintain ARC-WH's mandate in supporting Arab States parties in achieving a credible representation of World Heritage in the region, and ensuring the protection and safeguarding of properties and sites, ARC-WH Programmes and Activities follow the strategic objectives of the World Heritage Convention's Five Cs:

CAPACITY BUILDING
CONSERVATION
COMMUNITY
COMMUNICATION
CREDIBILITY

ARC-WH PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

ARC-WH developed integrated regional programmes and activities that promote interconnected and interdisciplinary approaches to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage in order to combine efforts towards enhancing the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Arab region.

ARC-WH programmes and activities are strategically designed to follow the 1972 World Heritage Convention and aligned with its Strategic Objectives. ARC-WH provides capacity-building programmes on the mechanisms and processes of the World Heritage Convention such as revising Tentative Lists and Nomination processes, knowledge sharing, technical assistance on conservation and development as well as other activities aimed at empowering the Arab States' heritage professionals' capabilities in protecting and managing natural and cultural World Heritage sites.



Ancient Ksour of Ouadane, Chinguetti, Tichitt and Oualata (Mauritania)
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1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.1 Advising State Parties towards the preparation of Word Heritage Nomination and the Harmonisation and Revision of the Tentative List

© Mudhafar Salim

ASSESSING THE ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC NATURAL HERITAGE VALUES OF THE HAWAR ISLANDS

YEARLONG PROJECT (2020)

HAWAR ISLANDS

NATURE

CONSERVATION

In 2019, ARC-WH, in partnership with Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiques (BACA), Supreme Council for Environment (SCE), Directorate of Marine Control at the Ministry of Work and Municipality Affairs, and other national and regional partners launched a project to highlight the outstanding natural heritage of Hawar Islands (Bahrain).

The report, Assessing the Ecological and Socio-economic Natural Heritage Values of Hawar Islands, was finalised in 2020. It evaluated the ecological and socio-economic baseline of the Hawar Islands, focusing on the biodiversity components of regional and international importance.

The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities (Iraq)
© Mudhafar Salim

1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.2 Supporting the Management of World Heritage Sites

THE JOURNEY OF A WATER TANK: TRANSPORTATION OF WATER TANK TO FERMHIN DRAGON'S BLOOD TREE NURSERY (SOCOTRA)

SEPTEMBER 2020

NATURE

SOCOTRA ARCHIPELAGO, YEMEN

CONSERVATION; COMMUNITY

ARC-WH visited Socotra Archipelago twice in 2020 to monitor the progress and state of conservation of its projects, and to maintain a close relationship with its partners from the local community.

During the second visit in September 2020, ARC-WH worked with its local Socotra Projects Coordinator to find a solution for the transportation of a large water tank needed for the endemic plant nursery, established in the mountainous Fermhin Protected Area, land of the iconic Dragon's Blood Tree *(Dracaena cinnabari)*.

Previously the local community was engaged in this project and achieved a milestone by connecting the Fermhin Village with a water source located 10 km away in the Skand Mountain. The transportation of the pipes up the mountain was impressively carried out on foot up However, the strenuous task was worth it. For the first time in history, the local community finally has fresh running water in their village.

And with this, a second milestone has been accomplished. For the first time in history, a large water tank was transported from Hadibou to Fermhin which will be instrumental, together with the running water from the Skand Mountain, in supporting the local endemic Dragon's Blood Tree to regenerate and thrive.

The transportation was essential to Phase II of the International Emergency Assistance project entitled 'Mitigation of Hurricane Impacts on Endemic and Threatened Plants of Socotra Archipelago', approved by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, and funded by the World Heritage Fund. Transporting the sizeable water tank up the winding rocky roads of Fermhin is no easy task, especially when trying to avoid damaging trees along the way.

There was one Dragon's Blood Tree in particular that the team wanted to avoid damaging during the transportation since its intricately dense crown hung over the pathway. Thanks to the assistance of five local men who accompanied the transportation from Hadibou, the tank made it up the winding road (without damaging any local flora) and arrived in the Fermhin Plant Nursery.

ARC-WH is glad to report that the nursery is in good condition. Local plants are regenerating, and seedlings are growing beneath the trees in the nursery. Overgrazing by goats as been eliminated through fencing and the relocation of seedlings from the pre-nursery is ongoing. For the next step, local community members will be hired, trained and supervised in monitoring and maintaining the nurseries for 16 months to share benefits and achieve long-term sustainability of the project outcomes.

INITIATION OF PHASE II OF THE MITIGATION OF HURRICANE IMPACTS ON ENDEMIC AND THREATENED PLANTS OF SOCOTRA ARCHIPELAGO

NATURE

2020

SOCOTRA ARCHIPELAGO, YEMEN

CONSERVATION; COMMUNITY

In 2020, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC) and ARC-WH entered into a second contract to enforce its technical support to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) of Socotra, Yemen, and implement the International Emergency Assistance financed by the UNESCO World Heritage Fund. Phase II of the project was launched in order to complete the establishment of two plant nurseries and to support the regeneration of the iconic endemic flora of the natural World Heritage Site of the Socotra Archipelago.

The Archipelago was struck by three cyclones between 2015 and 2018. Additionally, the endemic fauna species have faced further pressure from continuous overgrazing and development activities. The International Emergency Assistance project is implemented in two areas – the Protected Areas of Homhil and Fermhin –which were critically damaged by the impact of natural disasters. The Project Phase I concluded in 2019 with the creation of two fenced plant nurseries targeting the regeneration of the Socotran Frankincense tree (*Boswellia elongate*) and the Dragoon Blood tree (*Dracaena cinnabari*).

Phase II is foreseen to be implemented from 2020 – 2022, with a long-term vision of reaching sustainable regeneration of endemic and threatened plant species of the Socotra Archipelago. A team of four local community members will be actively involved in the regeneration of each nursery. The team will be hired and trained by ARC-WH's Socotra Projects Coordinator in the documentation, monitoring and long-term maintenance of the nurseries, contributing to the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site, for current and future generations.

1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.2 Supporting the Management of World Heritage Sites

CONTRIBUTION TO PHASE I OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME ON MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR SELECTED HERITAGE SITES IN TUNISIA

JULY 2020-ONGOING 2021

CULTURE

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION

In partnership with the Institut National du Patrimoine in Tunisia, ARC-WH and the World Monuments Fund developed a Technical Assistance Programme to improve management planning for three heritage sites in Tunisia. The sites selected by the national authorities include the World Heritage Sites of Dougga/Thugga, Kairouan, and Medina of Sfax, currently on the Tentative List. Phase I of the project was implemented between July and December 2020 and consisted of a series of online workshops and coordination meetings that were held online due to the social distancing restrictions related to the global pandemic.

During the workshops, participants received theoretical training on the needed mechanisms and concepts related to site management planning and monitoring. The training programme was initiated by general management principles, documentation and data collection, in addition to identifying management objectives using an integrated and cooperative approach at the level of each site.

Coordination meetings discussed the revision of various steps proposed by the working group, as well as the outcomes from their field visits, meetings organised at the site level, and the methodology of local and national cooperation with the stakeholders involved in preparing and implementing management planning.

Due to the compulsory social distancing restrictions, participants could not finalise the fieldwork and meet with all concerned stakeholders, which led to the project's delay. The project is currently continuing and should be finalised by the end of 2021.

TRANSLATION OF THE UPDATED VERSION OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES INTO ARABIC

1 SEPTEMBER 2020

CULTURE-NATURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION; COMMUNICATION; CREDIBILITY

The latest version of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention is now available in Arabic on the World Heritage Centre website and ARC-WH's website. The Operational Guidelines (Arabic) has not been updated since the previous text was published online in February 2005.

This version of the Guidelines has been translated, published and printed with support and funding provided by ARC-WH on 1 September 2020.

This translation is crucial for providing support for Arabic-speaking heritage professionals and experts to safeguard and protect cultural and natural heritage in the Arab region.

LAUNCH OF THE UPDATED VERSION OF THE ARC-WH APPLICATION FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

19 OCTOBER 2020

CULTURE-NATURE

CAPACITY BUILDING

To ensure that ARC-WH provides the Arab States Parties with the effective assistance and support for the conservation and management of cultural and natural World Heritage Sites, ARC-WH updated its application form for Technical Assistance.

ARC-WH uploaded the application onto its website on 19 October 2020 and is accessible in all three working languages (Arabic, English and French). ARC-WH also shared this form with all Arab States Focal Points.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, ARC-WH has had to limit its capacity building workshops onsite. Therefore, this digital application will help ensure constant communication between ARC-WH and Focal Points of World Heritage Sites in light of these restrictions.

EXPERT MEETING ON NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR NATURAL HERITAGE IN THE ARAB REGION

27 OCTOBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

NATURE

CONSERVATION

ARC-WH and its advisor and consultant Mr. Tarek Abulhawa conducted a Natural Heritage Needs Assessment initiative, which included an online Expert Meeting on the Needs Assessment for Natural Heritage in the Arab Region organised on 27 October 2020. The online meeting was attended by representatives from the World Heritage Centre (WHC), IUCN's World Heritage Programme as well as its Regional Office for West Asia, UNEP West Asia, ICOMOS, the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), along with regional experts and regional Site Managers from mixed and natural World Heritage Sites in the Arab region.

During the meeting, speakers reported on the state of natural World Heritage Sites, on both a global and regional level, and provided overviews of threats that natural heritage sites face. The discussions involved navigating a way forward through these increasing pressures, including better management, preservation and institutional cooperation.

Data from the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting of the Arab region and the Gap Analysis conducted by ICOMOS and ARC-WH will contribute to determining the gaps in natural World Heritage in the Arab region and will be summarised in a final report.

Medina of Tétouan (formerly known as Titawin), Morocco
© Editions Gelbart

1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.2 Supporting the Management of World Heritage Sites

TABE'A III REPORT: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGES AND ITS IMPACTS ON WORLD HERITAGE SYSTEMS

2020

NATURE

CONSERVATION; COMMUNICATION

In partnership with the IUCN World Heritage Programme, the publication *Tabe'a III: Nature – culture linkages, conflict and climate change impacts on natural heritage in the Arab region* entered in its final stage before completion.

The Tabe'a III Report includes three new thematic areas in the Arab region and the challenges and opportunities faced by natural heritage, such as impacts of extreme weather conditions and culture-nature interlinkages from a global and regional perspective, as well as the impacts of conflict on natural heritage sites.

Additionally, the publication provides an update on thematic activities by the Tabe'a Programme and the natural and mixed heritage sites since the previous Tabe'a II Report. It also includes a focus on developments regarding the national Tentative Lists in the Arab region.

Ichkeul National Park, Tunisia
© Editions Gelbart

1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.3 Supporting World Heritage Sites in Danger

ORGANISATION OF A WORKSHOP ON THE MECHANISMS AND CONCEPTS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION AND RISKS MANAGEMENT

23-27 FEBRUARY 2020

ARC-WH PREMISES

CULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING

In cooperation with ICCROM-ATHAR Regional Conservation Centre in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, ARC-WH organised a capacity building workshop on the Mechanisms and Concepts of the World Heritage Convention and Risks Management at its premises in Manama, Bahrain for a team of 12 heritage professionals and Site Managers from Yemen. The training was conducted by ARC-WH and an expert from ICCROM in World Heritage, risk prevention and conservation of cultural heritage in the event of disasters and conflict.

The workshop was held from 23 to 27 February 2020 and aimed at enhancing the capacities of Yemeni heritage professionals concerning the basic concepts and principles of the World Heritage Convention, and improving the protection and management of World Heritage Sites. The workshop also addressed issues related to the management and preservation of World Heritage Sites and shed light on fundamental topics related to heritage conservation, including natural heritage, and the World Heritages List in Danger. Moreover, the workshop also focused on monitoring and preserving World Heritage Sites by preparing reports on the state of conservation and other monitoring mechanisms.

A field visit was organised to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of 'Qal'at al-Bahrain – Ancient Harbour and Capital of Dilmun' to provide the participants with first-hand knowledge of the state of conservation, as well as administrative measures undertaken by Bahraini authorities towards the protection and conservation of the site. The workshop also included training on the revision of the Tentative List and the Retrospective Inventory to document World Heritage Sites in Yemen in accordance with the Operational Guidelines.

Follow-up and continued cooperation with Yemeni Heritage Professionals

During August and September 2020, ARC-WH held several meetings and a capacity building workshop with Site Managers and practitioners in the Old City of Sana'a and Seyoun - Hadhramout, Yemen. The workshops and meetings were attended by the representatives of the General Organisation for the Protection of Historic Cities in Yemen (GOPHCY), the General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) as well as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Participants were further familiarised with the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the concept of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and the role and procedures regarding the national Tentative List.

The mission in Yemen also allowed for the assessment of the Old City

CONTRIBUTION TO THE ONLINE WEBINAR 'THE INVINCIBLE CITY: SOCIETY IN CULTURAL HERITAGE RECOVERY'

21 OCTOBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

of Sana'a that was threatened by torrential rains that led to extensive damage of the historic city. ARC-WH visited sites of the devastation and consulted with site management regarding the emergency measures taken to provide first aid response to the affected areas and buildings.

ARC-WH contributed to the webinar on The invincible city: Society in cultural heritage recovery organised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and the National Institute of Cultural Heritage together with the World Heritage Centre UNESCO, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM).

The webinar was held on 21 October 2020 and invited a group of international experts in the protection of World Heritage to discuss the revival of historic cities devastated by war in the 20th century and to address the challenges that endanger heritage during times of destruction and conflict.

ARC-WH contributed to the second panel by discussing ARC-WH's role in the region and the various courses of action taken by ARC-WH to address the growing concerns of armed conflict and natural disasters that threaten heritage in the Arab region. Additionally, ARC-WH talked about the activities carried out by the Centre in collaboration with UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies, to address the challenges affecting the region.

1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.3 Supporting World Heritage Sites in Danger

ONLINE MEETING: WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER IN THE ARAB STATES REGION PROCESSES AND ACTIONS

23 NOVEMBER

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CONSERVATION; CREDIBILITY

On 23 November, ARC-WH in cooperation with UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC) organised an online meeting on the World Heritage in Danger in the Arab States Region, Processes and Actions. Participants from Arab States Parties, including National Focal Points and Site Managers, as well as representatives from WHC, ARC-WH, ICOMOS and UNESCO field offices, met online to discuss the mechanisms, functions and procedures of the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as the main outcomes of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting for the Arab Region concerning properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The meeting's primary objectives were to provide participants with a clear overview of the functionality and procedures of the World Heritage List in Danger to respond effectively to threats and factors facing endangered properties, as well as the planning and preparation of the Desired of States Of Conservation (DSCOR) for the removal of properties from the World Heritage List in Danger document, and the corresponding corrective measures. Additionally, discussions addressed the main outcomes of the Periodic Reporting process in the Arab States concerning sites inscribed on the Danger List.

The meeting also highlighted the successful removal of the site of the Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem (Palestine), from the Danger List in 2019, as well as lessons learned from this experience, together with other examples.

ATTENDED THE ONLINE TECHNICAL MEETING FOR SYRIAN PROPERTIES ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER

19 NOVEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION

On 19 November 2020 ARC-WH attended the online technical in the online technical meeting for Syrian properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger organised by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC), with support from the Italian Government and the World Heritage Fund. The meeting aimed at explaining the process for the implementation of the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of Syrian World Heritage Sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR).

The Ancient City of Damascus (Syria) was used as a case study to examine the progress achieved in implementing protection and conservation activities at the site. The meeting discussed the potential technical proposal for the corrective measures of removal from the List in Danger of the Ancient City of Damascus. The meeting was attended by stakeholders of the World Heritage Site, local Site Managers and representatives from WHC, the UNESCO Office in Beirut, ICOMOS, ICCROM and ARC-WH.

Ancient City of Damascus, Syria
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1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.3 Supporting World Heritage Sites in Danger

ATTENDED THE ONLINE TECHNICAL MEETING FOR LIBYA PROPERTIES ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER

25 NOVEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION

On 25 November 2020 ARC-WH attended the online technical meeting for Libya properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger organised by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC), with support from the Italian Government and the World Heritage Fund. The meeting explained the process for implementing the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of Libyan World Heritage Sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR).

The Old Town of Ghadamès (Libya) was used as a case study to examine the technical proposal for the corrective measures of removal. The meeting was attended by stakeholders of the World Heritage Site, local Site Managers and representatives from WHC, the UNESCO Office in Rabat, ICOMOS, ICCROM and ARC-WH.

21 SITES IN DANGER

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN DANGER IN THE ARAB REGION

1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.4 Developing and Fostering Synergies

ORGANISATION OF THE SECOND NATIONAL REDLIST WORKSHOP

12-14 JANUARY 2020

ARC-WH PREMISES

NATURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION

ARC-WH and the Supreme Council for Environment (SCE) held the Second National RedList Workshop from 12 to 14 January 2020, at ARC-WH premises in Manama, Bahrain. The workshop provided additional outcomes produced from the previous RedList Assessment Workshop held in February 2015, during which the conservation status of more than 20 species in Bahrain was assessed on a regional level by the Bahrain national team.

During the workshop, the national team reviewed species from the RedList Assessment Workshop and selected and evaluated 24 priority species with technical guidance from an international expert.

A technical report will be published in 2021. It will include the assessments of selected species and revisions and updated status of the assessed species during the first workshop in 2015.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL WATERBIRDS CENSUS IN BAHRAIN

15-17 JANUARY 2020

ARC-WH PREMISES

NATURE

CONSERVATION

ARC-WH and the Supreme Council for Environment (SCE) implemented the fourth annual mid-winter counts that targeted several vital wetlands and coastal areas in Bahrain. This activity forms part of the annual national programme of waterbird documentation initiated in 2017. The data gathered also contributed to the International Waterbirds Censuses (IWC) monitoring programme of Bahrain.

From 15 to 17 January 2020, a field team from both institutions acquired important observations on Bahrain's coastal birds and wetlands. One of the key findings was discovering a large breeding colony of Socotra Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*), a threatened species categorised as 'Vulnerable (VU)', in Al-Jarim Island, 20 km north of Bahrain.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE MAN AND BIOSPHERE (MAB) FOLLOW-UP MEETING BETWEEN ARC-WH, THE SUPREME COUNCIL FOR ENVIRONMENT (SCE) AND THE BAHRAIN NATIONAL TEAM

21 JANUARY 2020

ARC-WH PREMISES

NATURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION

On 21 January 2020, a technical follow-up meeting was held at ARC-WH's premises in Manama, Bahrain. It was organised between ARC-WH, the Supreme Council for Environment (SCE) and experts from the University of Bahrain to discuss the nomination file of the Hawar Islands as a potential Man and Biosphere (MAB) Reserve. This is the second follow-up meeting regarding the development of the nomination for the MAB Reserve. Participants collected different contributions and data from the Bahrain National Team and discussed the reports' technical and scientific components.

Medina of Tunis (Tunisia)
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1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.4 Developing and Fostering Synergies

THE CULMINATION OF THE SOQOTRA HERITAGE PROJECT "INTEGRATING CULTURAL HERITAGE INTO CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING ON SOQOTRA" FINAL WORKSHOP

2-6 FEBRUARY 2020

ARC-WH PREMISES

CULTURE – NATURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION; COMMUNICATION; COMMUNITY

As part of a partnership programme funded by the British Council Cultural Protection Fund, and implemented in collaboration between the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, the Freie Universität Berlin and ARC-WH, the Soqotra Heritage Project (CPL-185-16 - Integrating Cultural Heritage into Conservation and Development Planning on Soqotra) was launched in 2018 and reached the culmination of its first project phase marked, by the fourth workshop held from 2 to 6 February 2020 at ARC-WH's premises in Manama, Bahrain.

Participants consisted of a team of Socotries who received training during the past two years to document intangible and tangible cultural heritage. The fourth workshop consisted of practical exercises and modules that summarised what had been achieved so far and planning for the next project phase (if future funding is secured). The participants' extensive documentation and experiences were showcased during a short film presented on 6 February 2020 at ARC-WH during an official closing ceremony attended by a public audience and the HE the Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen well as his Consul and Cultural Attaché.

The Soqotra Heritage Project was designed to document and safeguard the cultural heritage of the Archipelago by creating a database that will be integrated within biodiversity conservation and development planning. The project sought to enhance local knowledge by organising practical and conceptual training for a team of Soqotries to enable them to conduct informed technical fieldwork and enrich the scientific research on the rich cultural heritage of the infamous natural World Heritage Site.

PARTICIPATION IN THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR DEVELOPING THE WATERBIRDS STRATEGY IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

1-5 MARCH 2020

SHARJAH, UAE

NATURE

CONSERVATION; COMMUNICATION

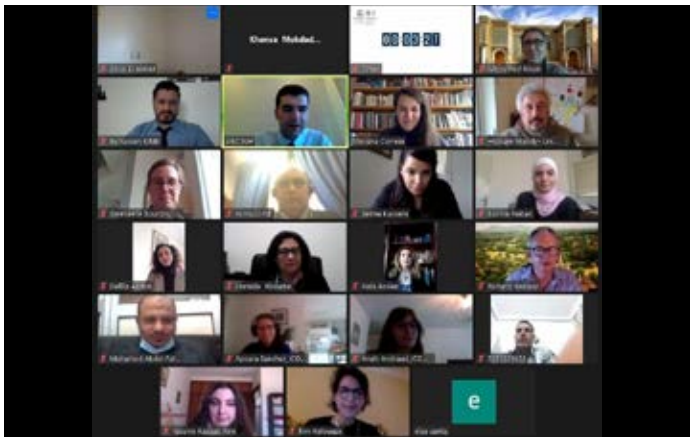
From 1 to 5 March 2020, the Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA) in cooperation with Wetlands International and BirdLife International organised the Regional Workshop for Developing the Waterbirds Strategy in the Arabian Peninsula in Sharjah, UAE.

ARC-WH assisted participants in waterbird identification and fieldwork methodologies and highlighted its experiences in conducting the International Water Bird Census (IWC) for Bahrain (2017-2020), in cooperation with the Supreme Council of Environment (SCE). Additionally, ARC-WH also discussed how the success of this case-study could be potentially implemented in other countries.

One of the workshop's main goals was to establish cooperation between regional stakeholders to enhance conservation procedures, documentation and monitoring techniques to protect the Arab region's unique natural heritage.

1. PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

1.5 Thematic Programmes on Culture-Nature



ADVANCED WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF WORLD HERITAGE PROFESSIONALS IN THE ARAB REGION FOR CULTURAL AND MIXED SITES

7, 8, 10 DECEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE-NATURE

CAPACITY BUILDING

On 7, 8 and 10 December 2020, ARC-WH, in collaboration with ICOMOS International, organised an advanced version of the Strengthening Capacities of World Heritage Professionals in the Arab Region for Cultural and Mixed sites capacity-building programme, held online due to the global pandemic.

The World Heritage professionals, previously trained by ARC-WH, ICOMOS and the other Advisory Bodies during two workshops, attended this advanced capacity building course. The first workshop was held in 2018 in Manama, Bahrain for anglophone speaking experts, while the second was held in Rabat Morocco in 2019 for francophone speakers.

The workshop's programme was structured according to current challenges confronting World Heritage and focused on the participating experts' feedback who conveyed this vital information following the gaps felt during their experience working with the World Heritage Convention in the Arab region.

Impact Assessment was a highlighted topic during the workshop since there were considerable concerns raised among the experts regarding the adverse effects of development in World Heritage properties and their vicinities. The workshop also examined communication procedures with the World Heritage Centre concerning issues such as the state of conservation reporting and Reactive Monitoring Process, and global challenges such as Climate Change and the effects of COVID-19 on World Heritage Sites.

Other themes covered were vernacular architecture in the Arab region, the nomination process including upstream, Tentative Listing, and nomination dossier preparation. The workshop also introduced the updated Arabic version of the Operational Guidelines and the main vocabulary to be used by the Arab States Parties, since its translation in 2005.

Tyre, Lebanon
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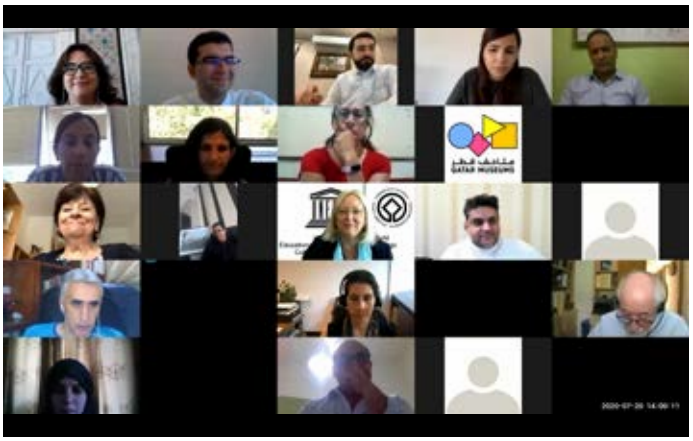
2. ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS

2.1 Joint Organisation of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting in the Arab States Regional Meeting of Focal Points for the preparation of a Regional Action Plan



JOINT ORGANISATION OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF THE PERIODIC REPORTING IN THE ARAB STATES REGIONAL MEETING OF FOCAL POINTS FOR THE PREPARATION OF A REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

20-21 JULY 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE AND NATURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CREDIBILITY

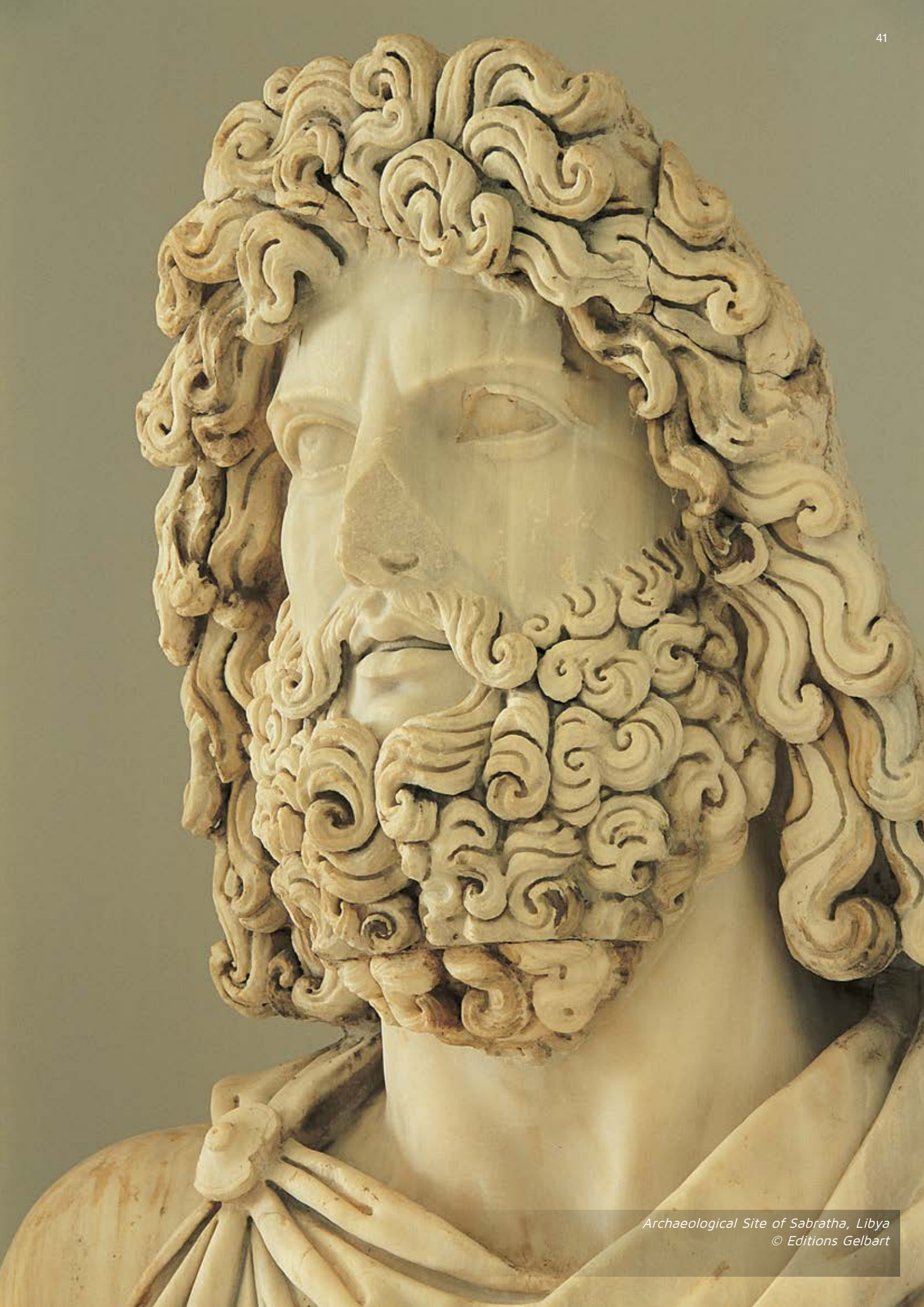
From 20 to 21 July 2020, ARC-WH, in close collaboration with the World Heritage Centre (WHC), organised the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting in the Arab States Regional Meeting of Focal Points for the preparation of a regional Action Plan. The two-day online meeting aimed at engaging with Arab States representatives, National Focal Points and Site Managers to propose recommendations in view of preparing the Regional Action Plan, which will be implemented in the next six years. The meeting was organised through an online communication platform to adapt to the global pandemic. Over a hundred participants from the Arab region participated in the meeting, along with the Advisory Bodies of the World Heritage Convention, and UNESCO Field Offices in the Arab States.

National Focal Points and World Heritage Site Managers have worked closely with WHC and ARC-WH since the start of the Periodic Reporting process, following the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee in 2018, to fill out Section I and Section II of the Questionnaire.

Since the completion and submission of the Questionnaires in 2019, WHC and ARC-WH have collaborated with experts to extract and analyse data and results from the responses to compile a comprehensive regional report. The summaries and main objectives of the results and outcomes were then presented and consulted with the participants during open discussions that sparked participants' feedback and proposals, which will help address the needs of the Arab region.

These exchanges and interventions were essential to the contribution and finalisation of the six-year Regional Action Plan, which addresses the Arab region's priorities and will be presented to the next World Heritage Committee session, for consideration and adoption. The States Parties will play a leading role in implementing the Action Plan at the regional and national level, supported by WHC, ARC-WH and the Advisory Bodies.

The drafts of Section I, Section II and the final report structure, along with the Monitoring Indicators and draft regional Action Plan were shared by ARC-WH with the World Heritage Centre (WHC). Following an internal review by the World Heritage Centre, the final document will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session for approval.



Archaeological Site of Sabratha, Libya
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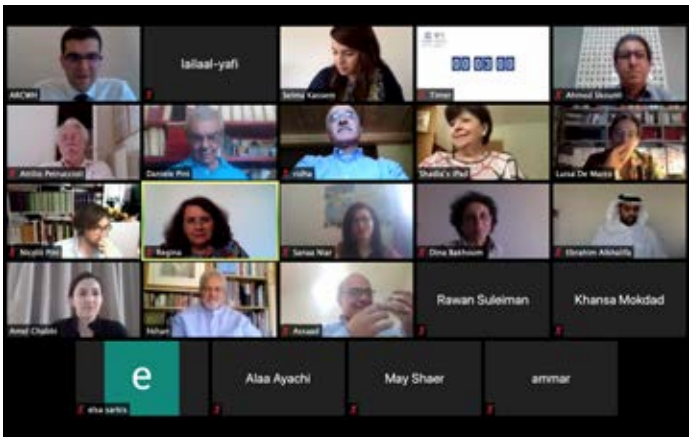
2. ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS

2.2 Joint organisation of Online Expert Meeting: Identifying the potential of the Arab States region for a more balanced World Heritage List (Gap Analysis Study)



JOINT ORGANISATION OF ONLINE EXPERT MEETING: IDENTIFYING THE POTENTIAL OF THE ARAB STATES REGION FOR A MORE BALANCED WORLD HERITAGE LIST (GAP ANALYSIS STUDY)

6-7, 9, 13, JULY 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION; CREDIBILITY

ARC-WH in cooperation with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) organised an online international experts meeting, held from 6-7, 9, 13 July 2020, to discuss the Gap Analysis Study of World Heritage Sites in the Arab region. The meeting also examined the outputs of a questionnaire prepared that identify regional gaps and elements that lead to the underrepresentation of sites from the Arab region.

The online meeting for the Gap Analysis Study promoted dialogue and exchange between regional and international experts who shared opinions and experiences towards the enhancement of protection and management of cultural and mixed heritage in the Arab region.

Discussions included ways in which Arab State Parties could identify potential sites from different historical periods and underrepresented themes and typologies, such as the heritage of architectural modernities, vernacular heritage and oases, and Cultural Landscapes. Experts also considered the institutional and legal frameworks that must be taken into consideration to enhance the capacities of Arab States in contributing to the achievement of a more balanced World Heritage List. One of the main outcomes of the Gap Analysis will be the production of a Regional Gap Report that is currently being finalised by ICOMOS. Translation of the report into Arabic will take place in 2021.

Aflaj Irrigation Systems of Oman
© Editions Gelbart

2. ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS

2.3 Publication of World Heritage of the Arab States Book – Second Edition

PUBLICATION OF WORLD HERITAGE OF THE ARAB STATES BOOK – SECOND EDITION

2020

CULTURE – NATURE

COMMUNICATION

Due to global travel restrictions enacted to prevent the spread of COVID-19, photographer Jean-Jacques Gelbart, commissioned by ARC-WH to photograph the latest inscribed World Heritage Sites in the Arab region, was unable to visit the last remaining countries to finalise the second edition of World Heritage of the Arab States.

The book has been postponed until international travel resumes.

ARC-WH has worked closely with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) to coordinate each new site's description texts from States Parties. The English and French versions of the text have been completed, and the Arabic translation is being finalised.

ALECSO also assisted in facilitating the photographic field missions of Gelbart by coordinating each visit with the Arab State Party concerned.

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORLD HERITAGE CULTURE SITES IN THE ARAB REGION

78 CULTURE SITES

2. ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS

2.4 Publication of the book on World Heritage Cities in the Arab Region

2.5 Organisation of the webinar on the Cultural Heritage and People – Building resilience in the Superimposed Trauma

PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK ON WORLD HERITAGE CITIES IN THE ARAB REGION

2020

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

ARC-WH has continued to work on the publication of World Heritage Cities in the Arab States which began in late 2019. The final publication will contain articles and analyse the urban heritage of the selected historic cities in the Arab Region presented during the public lectures held at ARC-WH from 2018 to 2019.

The publication's full text will be ready for final editing and proofreading by the end of December 2020. Design and printing of the publication have been postponed to 2021 due to the delays caused by the global pandemic.

ORGANISATION OF THE WEBINAR ON THE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND PEOPLE – BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE SUPERIMPOSED TRAUMA

21 DECEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CONSERVATION; COMMUNICATION; COMMUNITY

On 21 December 2020 ARC-WH held a webinar on Cultural Heritage and People - building resilience in the superimposed trauma that welcomed viewers worldwide. The webinar was organised in the framework of the Conference on integrated post-disaster reconstruction of cultural heritage – social, economic and psychological aspects of recovery that ARC-WH intends to organise in the presence of participants and speakers once social distancing restrictions are lifted. The Conference's programme includes various prominent experts and researchers who have already contributed to the publication that will be finalised at the forthcoming Conference.

The webinar welcomed a diverse panel of experts who proposed reflections on ways forward and sustainable solutions for heritage reconstruction and recovery challenges. The panellists also considered the communities that have suffered from significant economic ruin and social trauma faced with even more significant threats to their heritage and consequences from COVID-19.

The webinar is the first of three similar events that will be organised to enlarge the initial scope of the Conference for the discourse on the challenges of recovery and resilience following trauma and disaster and their impact on communities.

Viewers can access the webinar by going to arcwh.org

Samarra Archaeological City, Iraq
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3. COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

COPING WITH COVID-19

PARTICIPATION IN THE #SHAREOURHERITAGE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY UNESCO

1 APRIL – 31 MAY 2020

CULTURE-NATURE

COMMUNICATION; COMMUNITY

As COVID-19 spread across the globe, many cultural industries and World Heritage Sites were negatively impacted by social distancing restrictions and site closures. Consequently, many cultural and natural sites that rely heavily on global tourism for financial support towards management conservation and upkeep soon found themselves in need of support.

In response to this crisis, UNESCO launched the social media campaign #ShareourHeritage to promote international solidarity, assist the heritage sectors and institutions, and promote cultural heritage and cultural education during mass confinement.

ARC-WH actively contributed to the global social media campaign by requesting video testimonials from designated World Heritage Site Managers from the Arab region. The videos showcased how sites and their surrounding local communities were affected by COVID-19 and revealed the site management's commitment towards mitigating the negative impacts as much as possible.

The videos were posted online from 1 April to 31 May 2020 and remain accessible on ARC-WH's website and social media platforms.

ARC-WH also prepared a questionnaire that was shared with all World Heritage Site Focal Points and Site Managers in the Arab region to collect data on the impacts of COVID-19 and the challenges faced by properties. The responses received by ARC-WH were prepared in an assessment report and shared with the World Heritage Centre for future collaboration and joint actions to assist the most impacted sites.

LAUNCH OF ARC-WH E-LIBRARY

SPRING 2020

CULTURE-NATURE

COMMUNICATION

ARC-WH successfully launched its e-library in the spring of 2020. Books available have been partially scanned for those interested in visiting and utilitsing ARC-WH's library at its premises in Manama, Bahrain. ARC-WH's publications and translated works are also accessible on its e-library.

This online platform is an important tool for one of ARC-WH's key objectives of knowledge transfer and dissemination of information on World Heritage and conservation. The digitalisation of the library (accessible from the ARC-WH website) was particularly essential since it occurred in conjunction with COVID-19, which has severely restricted physical movement and changed the landscape of heritage training and learning.

4. OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY

Contributing to the Rehabilitation of Beirut's Cultural Heritage

Following the devastating explosion that ripped through Beirut, Lebanon, on 4 August 2020, the international community rallied behind the people of Beirut as they attempted to rebuild their homes and lives in the wake of the destruction. Many historic districts and cultural properties were also significantly damaged from the blast.

ARC-WH pledged financial support to contribute to the National Museum of Beirut and technical assistance, and committed its expertise in urban heritage recovery, towards the rehabilitation of the historic core of Beirut. ARC-WH took part in three international coordination meetings organised by UNESCO to address the recovery of Beirut, and how the international community could contribute to the safeguarding of its cultural heritage

4. OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY

Contributing to the Rehabilitation of Beirut's Cultural Heritage

UNESCO COORDINATION MEETING FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN BEIRUT

10 AUGUST 2020

MEETINGS HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CONSERVATION; COMMUNITY

In response to the tragic explosion that occurred in Beirut, Lebanon, on 4 August 2020, UNESCO organised a meeting on 10 August 2020 that was attended by the Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA) of the Ministry of Culture of Lebanon and representatives from ALIPH, ARC-WH, Blue Shield International, ICCROM, ICOM and ICOMOS. The meeting aimed to initiate consultation between international specialised organisations to identify the necessary steps for coordinated support for local intuitions, authorities and the local community to safeguard Beirut's cultural heritage to identity what was impacted by the blast.

The shockwaves of the explosion damaged several historic districts, museums and galleries including the National Museum, Sursock Museum and the Archaeological Museum of the American University in Beirut. The historic districts of Gemmayzeh and Mar-Mikhaël were also damaged, and the Malerie Marfa gallery and Galerie Tanit gallery were destroyed.

PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND UNESCO COORDINATION FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN BEIRUT

2 SEPTEMBER 2020

MEETINGS HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CONSERVATION; COMMUNITY

On 2 September 2020 ARC-WH participated in the second UNESCO Coordination for Emergency Response in Beirut. The meeting aimed at continuing the consultation between international organisations to assist local intuitions, authorities and the local community for safeguarding Beirut's cultural heritage. The meeting also aimed at identifying was tragically damaged during the blast.

ORGANIZATION OF COORDINATION MEETING BETWEEN ARC-WH AND LEBANON'S DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF ANTIQUITIES (DGA)

6 OCTOBER 2020

MEETINGS HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CONSERVATION; COMMUNITY

ARC-WH and the Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA) of Lebanon organised an online coordination meeting on 6 October 2020 to discuss potential collaboration on the safeguarding and recovery of Beirut's cultural heritage damaged from the blast in August 2020. Both institutions also talked about efforts being carried out by local and international partners on the ground. The meeting included ways in which ARC-WH could support and facilitate technical assistance to safeguard and recover Beirut's cultural heritage.

THIRD UNESCO COORDINATION MEETING FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE ON CULTURE IN BEIRUT

22 OCTOBER 2020

MEETINGS HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CONSERVATION; COMMUNITY

On 22 October 2020 UNESCO organised the third meeting to continue the mobilisation of local and international partners actively safeguarding and contributing to the revitalisation of the cultural sector of Beirut. Participants were updated on the progress of interventions and priorities in the field. The meeting aimed at facilitating the coordination of interventions and prioritisation, as well as the finalisation of UNESCO's International Action Plan for Culture in Beirut.

ARC-WH reaffirmed its commitment towards the preservation and recovery of built cultural heritage in Beirut and informed UNESCO about its continued coordination with the DGA in Lebanon, as well as is mobilisation efforts with other stakeholders in advising for the recovery of urban heritage of the most affected area.

© Ghassan Chemali

Portuguese City of Mazagan (El Jadida), Morocco
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5. PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

PARTICIPATION IN THE 2ND EXPERT DRAFTING GROUP MEETING ON THE REFORM OF THE WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION PROCESS

12-16 JANUARY 2020

PARIS, FRANCE

CULTURE

CREDIBILITY

From 12 to 16 January 2020 ARC-WH participated in the 2nd Expert Drafting Group Meeting on the Reform of the World Heritage Nomination Process held at UNESCO in Paris, France. The meeting discussed the operationalisation of the reform previously proposed by the ad hoc working group, and the previous Tunisia Expert Meeting on the Nomination Reform.

Several amendments were proposed for the current nomination process, notably the Preliminary Assessment, as a mandatory procedure. The meeting also discussed the additions and changes proposed for the Operational Guidelines text to ensure more coherency and accuracy regarding the proposed amendments from the previous meeting held in 2019.

The Drafting Group continued communicating and reflecting on the proposed changes following the meeting online. After the final draft that included the proposed amendments were agreed upon by the expert group, a background document was prepared to be submitted to the ad hoc working group proceeding the subsequent 44th session of the World Heritage Committee. A final draft of the amended Operational Guidelines will also be submitted.

PARTICIPATION IN THE HERITAGE IN URBAN CONTEXTS: IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ON WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES IN CITIES

14-17 JANUARY 2020

KYUSHU UNIVERSITY FUKUOKA, JAPAN

CULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION

ARC-WH was among 16 experts from five World Heritage regions invited to participate in the meeting on Heritage in Urban Contexts: Impacts of Development Projects on World Heritage properties in Cities, and was jointly organised by Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs and Kyushu University in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM. The meeting was held from 14 to 17 January 2020 at Kyushu University Fukuoka, Japan (ARC-WH attended via Zoom).

Experts discussed establishing a methodology towards the identification and evaluation of values of World Heritage properties in urban contexts. Other areas of deliberation included managing heritage in urban frameworks with particular attention on World Heritage properties, heritage conservation and management, as well as the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) Recommendations and additional tools and mechanisms that could be utilised.

CONTRIBUTION TO MSC PROGRAMME IN CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

19 FEBRUARY

UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

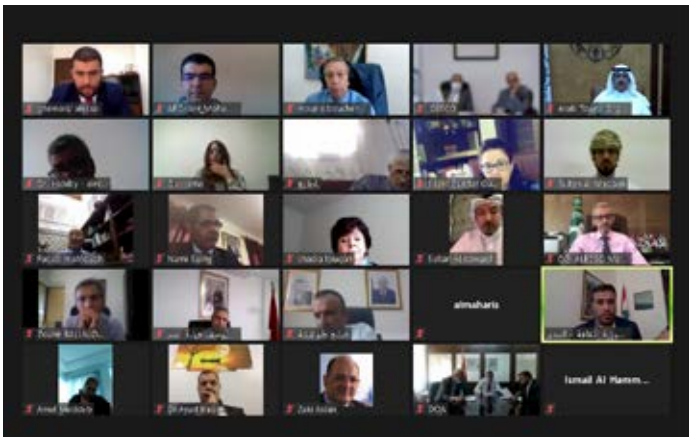
CULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; COMMUNICATION

ARC-WH was invited by ICCROM-ATHAR Regional Conservation Centre, based in Sharjah, UAE, to contribute to the Master's Programme (MSc) in Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage. The programme was established in collaboration between ICCROM and the University of Sharjah. ARCWH contributed to two sessions that covered World Heritage by teaching students about the World Heritage Convention's general framework and its processes and mechanisms.

The first session was conducted at the University of Sharjah. Thanks to the fruitful collaboration between ARC-WH and ICCROM-ATHAR within the general framework of cooperation between the two organisations, these sessions were successfully implemented.

5. PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION



PARTICIPATION IN THE ALECSO ONLINE MEETING: CONFERENCE ON ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE ARAB WORLD

9 SEPTEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CONSERVATION; COMMUNICATION

On 9 September 2020, ARC-WH was invited to participate in an online Conference on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage in the Arab World organised by ALECSO to discuss the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger in the Arab region. Discussions also included the situation unfolding in Beirut following the tragic blast that damaged many areas of the city and its invaluable cultural heritage in August 2020. The meeting was attended by several Arab States directors of cultural heritage departments, international experts, and representatives from ICCROM-ATHAR ICOM, ICESCO, Arab Towns Organisation and UNESCO Rabat.

During the meeting, ARC-WH presented an overview of World Heritage Sites and properties in the Arab region and the main challenges that need to be addressed to enhance the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger. Moreover, ARC-WH proposed a set of recommendations that could address the challenges faced by inscribed properties and how organisations and institutions could provide further assistance for the State of Lebanon during the recovery and rehabilitation of Beirut.

PARTICIPATION IN ALECSO MEETING FOR THE COOPERATION BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND BODIES TO SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF ARAB COUNTRIES TO PROTECT THEIR HERITAGE PROPERTIES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

15 OCTOBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CONSERVATION

ARC-WH contributed to the online meeting organised by the Arab League for Educational, Cultural and Science (ALECSO) on 15 October 2020 for the cooperation between international and regional organisations and institutions towards the support of Arab countries to protect their heritage in times of crisis.

The meeting focused on establishing regional cooperation between organisations responsible for culture and heritage to address emergencies and assist countries whose heritage sites are threatened by human-made or natural disaster.

CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD HERITAGE CITIES PROGRAMME URBAN NOTEBOOKS – REFLECTION OF AN EXPERT: DR SHADIA TOUQAN (OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2020)

OCTOBER 2020

CULTURE

CONSERVATION; COMMUNICATION

At the World Heritage Cities Programme's request, the director of ARC-WH, Dr Shadia Touqan, was asked to contribute to the 'World Heritage Cities Programme Urban Notebooks' (Newsletter October 2020) by providing an expert think piece.

In her video and written intervention, she talks about the 'Historical Centre at the core of the Contemporary City' and how historical cities in the Arab region are affected by increasing pressures like rapid population growth and neglect that lead to urban decay and deterioration of historical cities.

The full intervention can be accessed on the World Heritage Cities Programme website and ARC-WH's website.

CONTRIBUTION TO MASTER PROGRAMME (MSC) IN CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE (SECOND CYCLE)

25 NOVEMBER

HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM

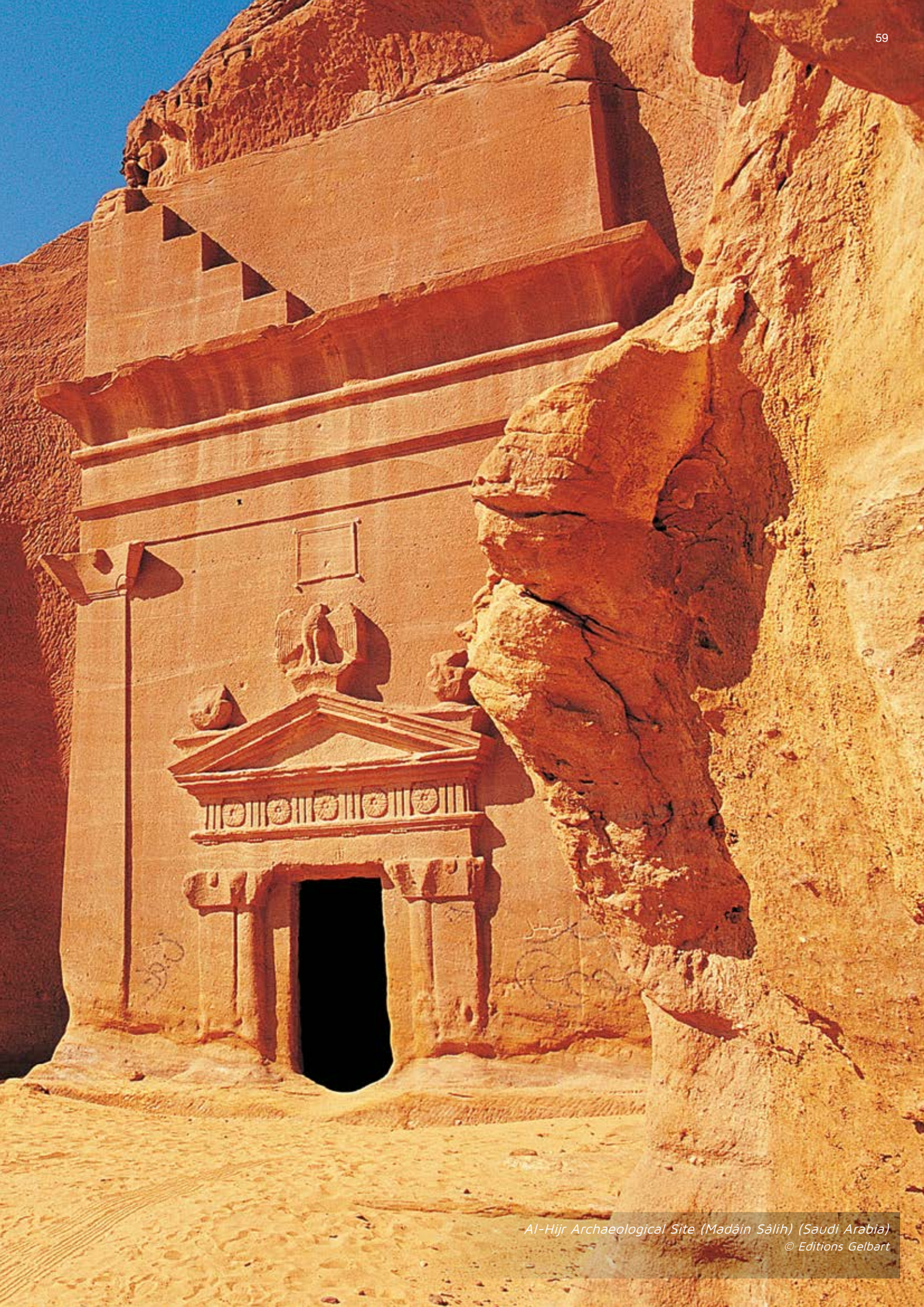
CULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING

On 25 November 2020 ARC-WH contributed to the second cycle of the Master programme (MSc) in Conservation Management of Cultural Heritage, held online due to the restrictive circumstances of COVID-19. The programme is implemented by ICCROM-Sharjah and the University of Sharjah.

ARC-WH's intervention for the module on World Heritage aimed to educate and provide first-year master's students with a comprehensive understanding and overview of the World Heritage Convention mechanisms and implementation, in addition to the Convention's main goals and the stakeholders involved. Moreover, ARC-WH introduced the students to the Operational Guidelines and expanded upon its core concepts and how the World Heritage Convention is implemented through the Guidelines.

The students also learned about the List of World Heritage in Danger, referred to as the Danger List, and the Desired State of Conservation drafting process (DSCOCR). They also learned about the inscription of properties on the Danger List and all related mechanisms and benefits for the sites.



Al-Hijr Archaeological Site (Madāin Sālih) (Saudi Arabia)
© Editions Gelbart

6. OTHER ACTIVITIES

ORGANISATION OF THE HERITAGE OF EARTHEN ARCHITECTURE IN THE ARAB STATES

17 FEBRUARY

ARC-WH PREMISES

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION; COMMUNITY; CONSERVATION

In partnership with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Scientific Committee on Earthen Architectural Heritage (ICOMOS-ISCEAH), ARC-WH organised an exhibition on Heritage of Earthen Architecture in the Arab States held at its premises in Manama, Bahrain, on 17 February 2020.

The exhibition showcased unique vernacular earthen architecture of the region and presented the diversity and richness of earthen structures. The exhibition highlighted the threats and difficulties faced when protecting and transmitting information on earthen architecture to future generations, mainly due to deterioration and Climate Change. It also demonstrated the potential of this typology of heritage for future nominations.

Additionally, the exhibition included the preparation of a leaflet in Arabic and English that contained further information on the exhibition's topic, such as the history of earthen architecture in the region and the different techniques and types of these unique structures

LAUNCH OF THE EXHIBITION ON NEW WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN THE ARAB REGION

17 FEBRUARY

ARC-WH PREMISES

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

ARC-WH launched the exhibition on New World Heritage Sites in the Arab Region on 17 February 2020 at its premises in Manama, Bahrain. The exhibition included pictures of World Heritage Sites in the Arab region inscribed on the World Heritage List within the last decade.

This exhibition's main goal was to illustrate the achievements in identifying and protecting the continued effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Arab Region.

OBSERVATION OF THE 27TH AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE FUND (AWHF) BOARD OF TRUSTEES SESSION

24 JULY

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

ARC-WH was invited to observe the 27th African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) Board of Trustees Session. Sessions touched upon essential operations of the Fund. The virtual meetings took place from 21 to 23 July 2020.

AWHF is Category II Centre under the auspices of UNESCO. The Fund is hosted by the South African government on behalf of the African continent.

Archaeological Site of Volubilis (Morocco)
© Editions Gelbart

6. OTHER ACTIVITIES

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT OF REVISING THE NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE LAW OF BAHRAIN

14 OCTOBER

MANAMA, BAHRAIN/ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING; CONSERVATION; COMMUNICATION; CREDIBILITY

ARC-WH was invited by the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) to participate in the working group responsible for revising the national heritage law adopted in 1995. ARC-WH attended several coordination meetings with a group of heritage professionals to address the main scope and objectives addressed in the revision. Furthermore, a workshop on the preparation and assessment of legal frameworks was organised by ARC-WH with international legal experts' assistance in cultural legislation. The training was held online on the 7 October 2020.

Following the workshop, ARC-WH, in collaboration with BACA, was requested to prepare a concept note and guiding document summarising the main outcomes of the reflection on the revision of the heritage law.

The document addresses the main objectives and scope of the revision and the need for a more comprehensive approach and strategy for protecting cultural heritage in line with international conventions adopted by the Kingdome of Bahrain. The document also includes steps towards implementing this project with concerned local authorities and decision-makers.

Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis, Egypt
© Editions Gelbart

Socotra Archipelago, Yemen
© Editions Gelbart

6. OTHER ACTIVITIES

©AbdelHamid Salah El-Sharief

ORGANISATION OF WEBINAR AND VIDEO COMMEMORATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ISLAMIC ART

25 NOVEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

In celebration of the International Day of Islamic Art that takes place annually on 18 November, ARC-WH organised a webinar on 25 November 2020 that featured discussions by two experts of Islamic heritage to discuss the main influence of Islamic Art on Historic Cities.

The first expert was Dr Ebrahim Shabouh, a member Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts and expert advisor to ALECSO presented the Islamic architecture in the historical city of Kairouan. The second expert to present was Dr Mohamed Hussam Ismail, professor of Islamic Archaeology at Ain Shams University and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Association (Heritage and traditional arts in Cairo) who talked about Islamic Art and Architectural Heritage.

Additionally, ARC-WH broadcasted a pre-recorded presentation done by Dr Abdelhamid Al Salah, who discussed the documentation, restoration and conservation of the Mamluk Minbars of the World Heritage Site, Historic Cairo. Dr Abdelhamid is the Project Manager and Chairman of the Egyptian Heritage Rescue Foundation, of 'Rescuing the Mamluk Minbars of Cairo', funded by the British Council.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE: CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A FRAMEWORK FOR SOLIDARITY AND DEVELOPMENT

29 NOVEMBER 2020

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, held annually on 29 November, ARC-WH launched a pre-recorded lecture under Cultural Heritage as a Framework for Solidarity and Development with an exhibition that consists of images and artworks done by Bahraini and Palestinian artists. The video included a welcome address by Her Excellency Sheikha Mai Bint Mohamed Al Khalifa, Chairperson of ARC-WH Governing Board, and two international experts in cultural heritage who presented the role of cultural diplomacy in preserving the World Heritage and the cultural identity of the Palestinian people.

Dr Mounir Bouchenaki, a former Advisor to UNESCO Director-General, addressed cultural diplomacy and its role in safeguarding the Palestinian Culture. The second speaker Dr Hamdan Taha, a researcher and archaeologist, focused his intervention on the role of the Palestinian community in preserving cultural heritage.

The lecture and exhibition can be accessed on ARC-WH's website.

Kairouan, Tunisia
© Editions Gelbart

Old Town of Ghadamès (Libya)
© Editions Gelbart

6. OTHER ACTIVITIES

PARTICIPATION IN THE PLENARY SESSION: DAY OF PALMYRA. PROBLEMS OF PROTECTING THE "ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS OF PALMYRA" UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

2 DECEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

At the invitation of the State Hermitage Museum, located in St. Petersburg, Russia, ARC-WH participated in round table discussion on the Plenary Session: Day of Palmyra. Problems of protecting the "Archaeological Monuments of Palmyra" UNESCO World Heritage Site. The online meeting addressed the challenges of protecting the archaeological monument, as well as potential approaches to its reconstruction and restoration.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE '1ST ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF ISLAMIC ART AND ARCHITECTURE' ORGANISED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

3 DECEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

The University of Bahrain, College of Engineering, Department of Architecture and Interior Design, organised the 1st Annual Symposium of Islamic Art and Architecture on 3 December 2020 to celebrate the International Day of Islamic Art and the contribution that Islamic Art plays in the role of cultural expression and diversity.

ARC-WH was invited as a keynote speaker, alongside Dr Haifa Al-Khalifa, Chairwomen of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design and Professor Mishary Al Naim, Secretary-General of Abdullatif Alfozan Award for Mosque Architecture, to discuss historical Islamic cities within the framework of World Heritage and the values and attributes.

ARC-WH introduced the main concepts of World Heritage and the processes leading to the inscription of new sites. The Centre also briefly expanded upon the main topic of discussion regarding Islamic art and architecture by providing various examples of properties on the World Heritage List linked to historic Islamic influence. ARC-WH's presentation included distinctions between historical Islamic sites and historical Islamic sites of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The keynote intervention also highlighted the differences between values and attributes and how they are physical assets that convey values (mainly intangible).

ORGANISATION OF THE ONLINE REGIONAL MEETING WITH PERMANENT DELEGATIONS OF ARAB STATES TO UNESCO

14 DECEMBER 2020

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

On 14 December 2020, ARC-WH organised an online meeting with the Permanent Delegations of Arab States to UNESCO on ARC-WH's role and its future strategies towards the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the region. The meeting aimed to strengthen communication and coordination with the delegations and build new partnerships to enhance World Heritage protection and promotion in the Arab States.

The online meeting served as an alternative to ARC-WH's annual meeting with the Delegations of Arab States to UNESCO held during the World Heritage Committee Sessions, which was postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19.

During the meeting, several proposals were made to enhance the Centre's actions and strengthen regional coordination with concerned stakeholders. The meeting was also an opportunity to take stock of ARC-WH's achievements in the Arab region and inform the Arab States Delegation of future strategies and programmes of the ARC-WH.

ARABIC LANGUAGE DAY

18 DECEMBER 2020

ONLIE VIA ZOOM

CULTURE

COMMUNICATION

In cooperation with Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), ARC-WH celebrated World Arabic Language Day, held annually on 18 December, by sharing a recorded lecture that examines the topic of "Arabic Language. Academies: Necessity or Luxury?"

The video is accessible on ARC-WH's website and YouTube channel.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND COASTS 2020

21-22 DECEMBER

FUJAIRAH, UAE

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

NATURE

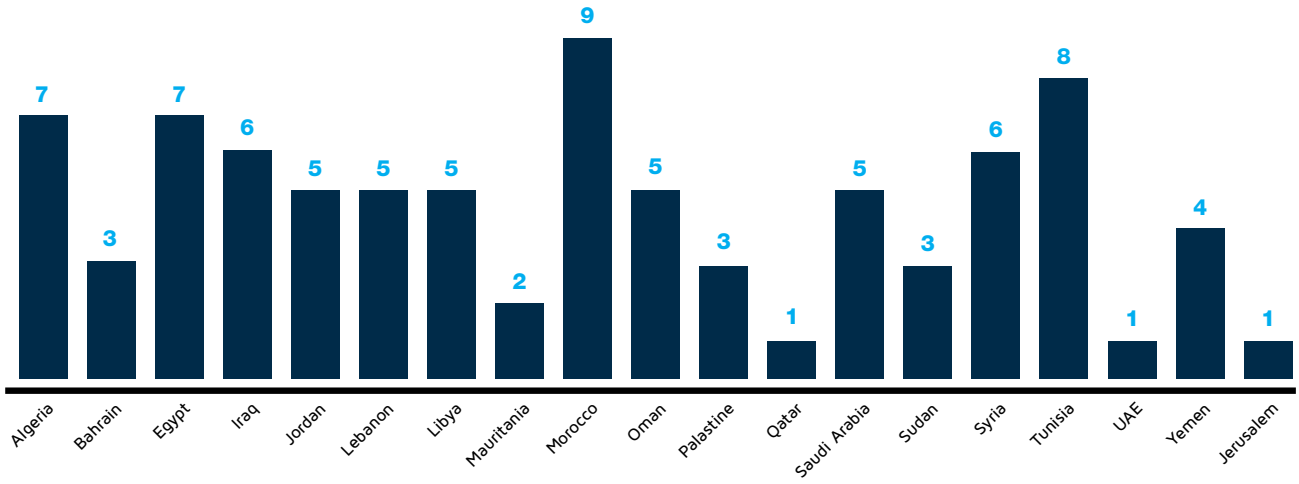
CONSERVATION

From 21 to 22 December 2020, ARC-WH contributed to the Third International Conference on Marine Environment and Coasts 2020 in Fujairah, UAE. ARC-WH attended the conference via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. The conference was held under the theme, Green Development of Coastal Areas, and addressed various issues regarding crucial and sensitive types of environment.

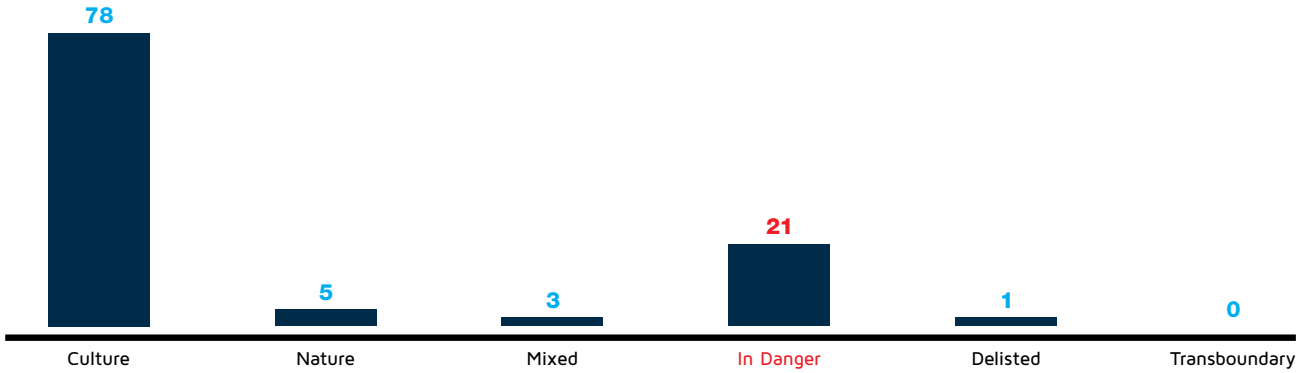
During the conference, ARC-WH presented on Coastal World Heritage Properties in the Arab Region: Examples on the Best Practices in the Sustainable Development, and provided insightful and detailed descriptions on effective and sustainable practices. ARC-WH's intervention also included its programmes and efforts in achieving sustainable development in coastal sites.

STATISTICS AND FIGURES

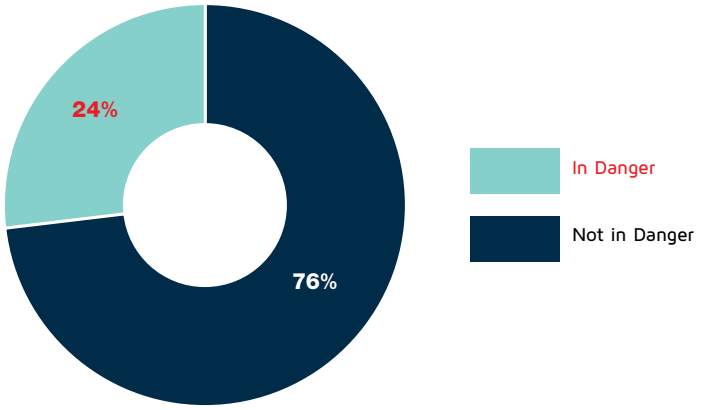
86 WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN THE ARAB REGION



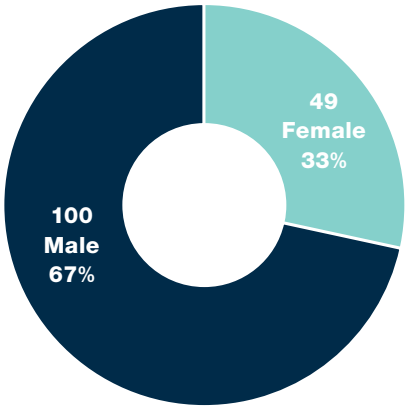
WORLD HERITAGE IN THE ARAB REGION



WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER IN THE ARAB REGION

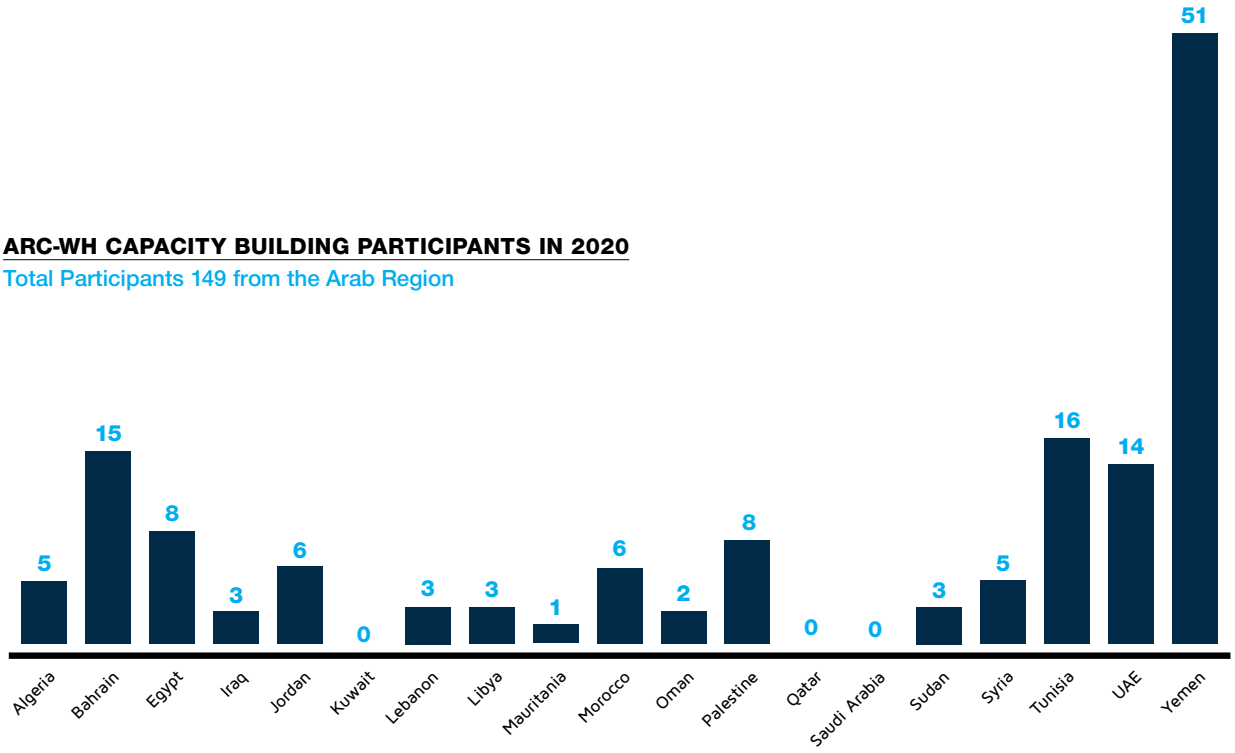


GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF CAPACITY BUILDING PARTICIPANTS FROM THE ARAB REGION 2020



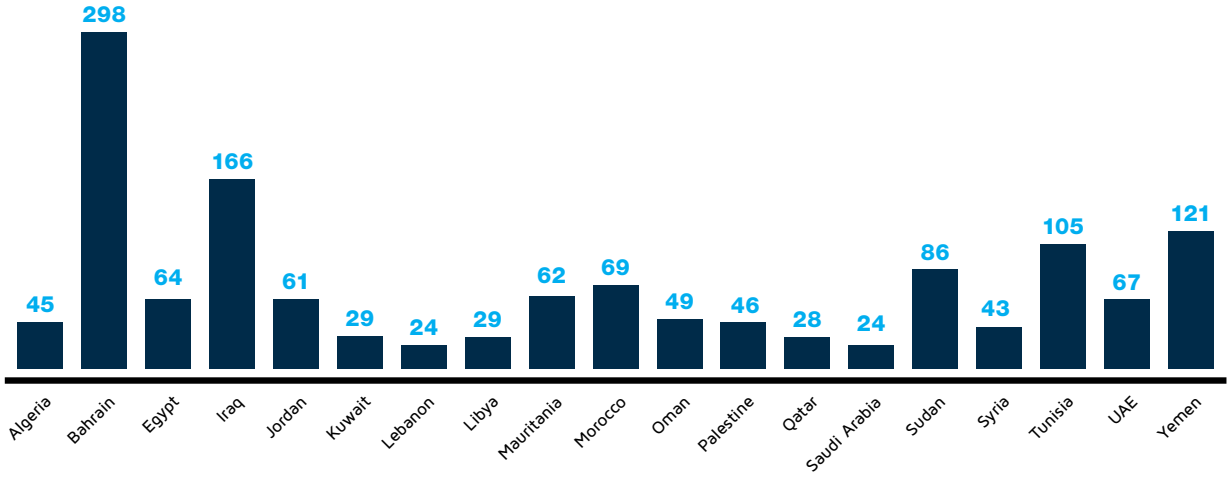
ARC-WH CAPACITY BUILDING PARTICIPANTS IN 2020

Total Participants 149 from the Arab Region



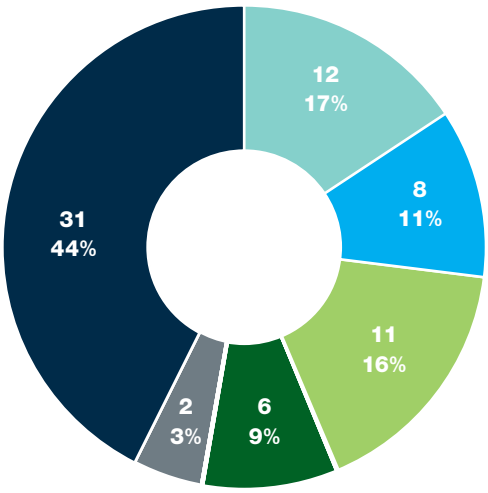
ARC-WH CAPACITY BUILDING PARTICIPANTS FROM 2012-2020

Total Participants 1416 from the Arab Region



ARC-WH ACTIVITIES 2020 - TOTAL 70 ACTIVITIES

- Workshops 17%
- Public events & lectures 11%
- Technical & financial assistance 16%
- Publications & translations 9%
- Exhibitions 3%
- Conference & meeting attendance 44%



Saint Catherine Area, Egypt
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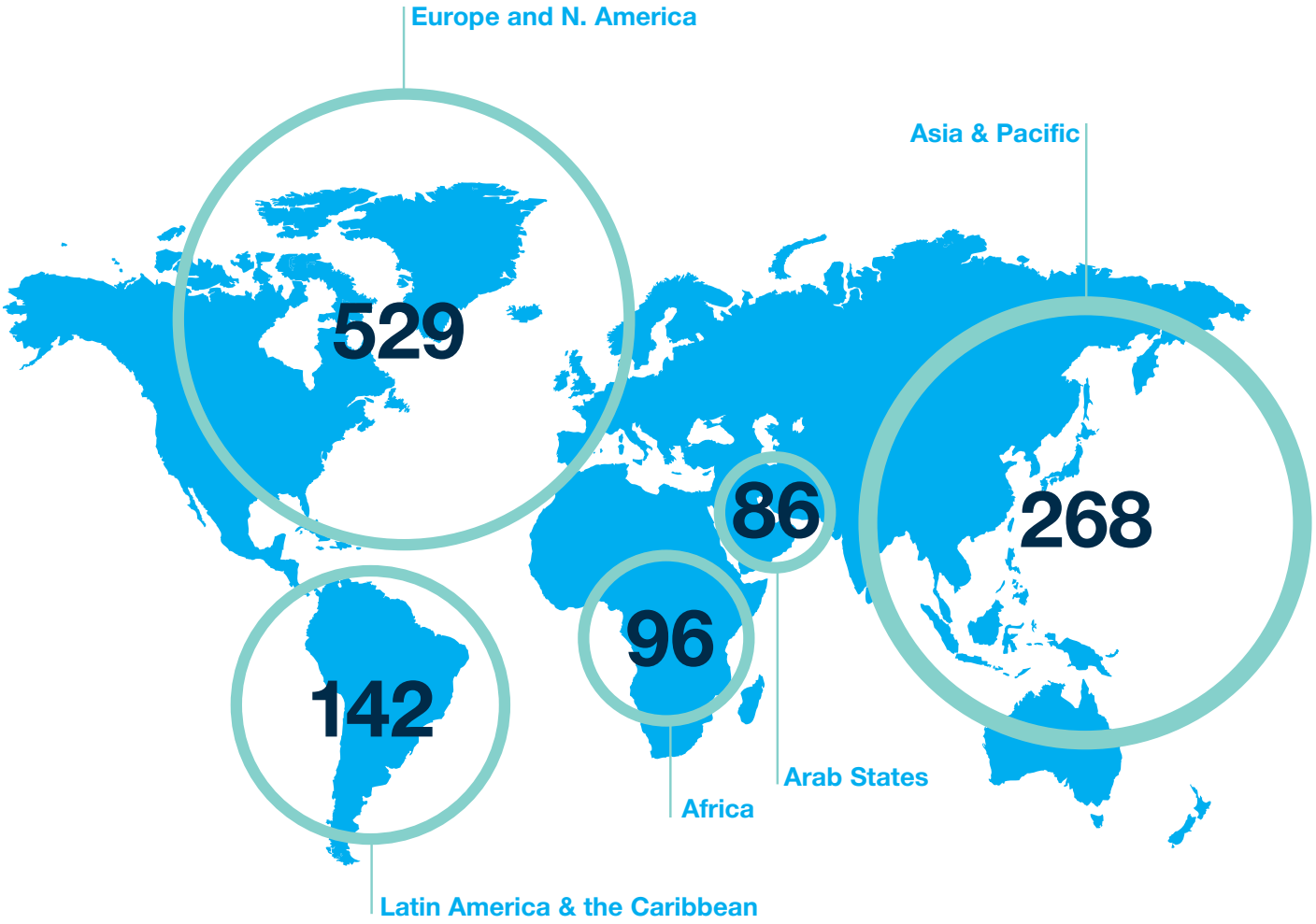
STATISTICS AND FIGURES

NUMBER OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES BY REGION



MAIN PARTNERS

UNESCO/ World Heritage Centre

Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities

International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

International Union for Conservation of Nature

African World Heritage Fund