Activities supported by the Heritage Emergency Fund in YEMEN

Monitoring of the state of cultural heritage via satellite imagery (2017 and 2018)

In the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNESCO and UNITAR-UNOSAT in 2016, the Heritage Emergency Fund continued to support the emergency monitoring via satellite imagery of cultural heritage sites. In this context, in 2017 and 2018, satellite imagery was received and analyzed for four cultural and one natural properties in Yemen: the World Heritage property "Old City of Sana’a", the World Heritage property “Historic Town of Zabid”, the World Heritage property “Socotra Archipelago”, the archaeological site of Marib, on the country’s Tentative List, as well as the Old City of Taiz.
Coordination of the follow-up to UN Security Council Resolutions 2199 and 2253 (2018 and 2016)

In 2016, a UNESCO Focal Point was supported by the Heritage Emergency Fund to ensure the follow-up of UN Security Council Resolutions 2199 (February 2015) and 2253 (December 2015), concerning a world-wide moratorium on the trade in artefacts of illicit origin from Syria and Iraq. Its purpose also was to provide advice and support to Member States on other issues related to the prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural property from these countries. In 2018, the Heritage Emergency Fund enabled UNESCO to proceed to an analytical assessment of reports from Member States on their implementation of Resolution 2199. These reports revealed the most commonly used trafficking routes and contributed to the establishment of a list of seized artefacts originating in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. In this context, UNESCO liaised with the United Nations Security Council with regard to the implementation of its Resolutions, including direct communication on risks of smuggling of antiquities and cultural objects from conflict areas in Yemen for sale abroad. Following an immediate request from the Security Council Committee of Resolution 2140 (2014), a template was drafted to be sent to auction houses alerting and requesting stronger vigilance regarding the potentially illegal export and sale of Yemeni artefacts. Moreover, country briefings were prepared with regards to illicit trafficking and return and restitution issues.

Meeting on GIS, museums and awareness raising activities for safeguarding cultural heritage in Yemen (2016)

A meeting on GIS, museums and awareness raising activities for safeguarding cultural heritage in Yemen was organized in Venice, Italy, from 19 to 20 December 2016. It brought together experts from different archaeological missions in Yemen, specialists from the British Museum and Oxford University, and UNESCO representatives. The information shared during the meeting and the joint activities that were agreed upon enabled UNESCO to better plan and coordinate future activities in Yemen, within the overall framework of the Emergency Response Plan for the country.