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Expressions of Solidarity

The General Management of ISPAN thanks all individuals, associations and organizations from the heritage preservation sector, both nationally and internationally, who have expressed their sympathy and solidarity with the Haitian people, who have been severely tried by the earthquake of 12 January 2010.

Already on the day after the earthquake, the Dominican architects, Esteban Prieto, Gustavo "Cuquito" More, Emilio Brea, Eugenio Perez Montas, all great and longstanding friends of Haiti and members of the Caribbean Council of Monuments and Sites (CARIMOS) mobilised themselves.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), an advisory body to UNESCO, through its President, the architect Gustavo Araoz, alerted ICOMOS members and the international heritage preservation community. Hundreds of individual members and the National and International Scientific Committees responded overwhelmingly to the call and indicated their willingness to participate in a global solidarity effort to assess, protect and restore the cultural heritage of Haiti following the terrible earthquake that struck our country on 12 January.

Aware that, beyond the material loss involved in the destruction of a historic monument, each case also constitutes an immeasurable loss to the culture, history and memory of the Haitian people as a whole, the ICOMOS National Committees of Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Macedonia, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela have indicated their willingness to organize their voluntary assistance to provide help in situ or in other ways. Some have gone even further, such as the National Committee of Kazakhstan who has built up a team of a dozen volunteer experts willing to travel immediately. The Japanese and Chinese Committees have offered expert teams in emergency measures for heritage.

To coordinate this massive volunteer effort, and manage the complex next steps in the most professional and efficient way, the President of ICOMOS has appointed a Steering Committee for the rescue and recovery of the heritage of Haiti composed of eminent international experts in the field. Former ICOMOS Secretary General, and current President of ICOMOS Canada, Dinu Bumbaru has kindly agreed to chair this committee which at present gathers Rohit Jigyasu from India, Stephen J. Kelley and Samuel N. Stokes from the United States, Daniel Lefèvre from France, Kanefusa Masuda from Japan, Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy from Australia, Axel Mykleby from Norway, Esteban Prieto from the Dominican Republic, Tong Mingkang from China, and Rasool Vatandoust from Iran. In the United States, Universities, including those of Pennsylvania and Texas in San Antonio, have offered to organize and deploy teams of volunteers composed of heritage preservation students and teachers to assist in the assessment and recovery operations. The Savannah College of Art and Design has also indicated its ability to deploy teams to Haiti immediately and at its own expense.

The World Heritage Centre, particularly concerned by the case of the historic centre of Jacmel, inscribed on the World Heritage Tentative List, has initiated the establishment of a support platform through an inter-agency collaboration among international organisations in

favour of the reconstruction of the cultural heritage of Haiti. This initiative will rely on a preliminary report by ISPAN on the state of the historic city centre of Jacmel following the quake of 12 January.

Given the large number of assistance proposals that have been received from the different entities in the heritage preservation sector, the General Management of ISPAN has asked the ICOMOS Steering Committee for technical assistance to coordinate and make the most effective and efficient use of the proposed actions.

Daniel Elie
Director General

Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National
Angle des rues Chériez et Martin Luther King
HT1160 Port-au-Prince
Haiti
Telephone:
245-3118
245-3211
244-2801