

CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL
DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
ON MONUMENTS AND SITES

**Report
on the ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission
to World Heritage Site**

**ISLAMIC CAIRO
(EGYPT)**

(9-16 March 2005)

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Reactive Monitoring Mission to Islamic Cairo (Egypt) 9-16 March 2005.

Table of Contents:

Introduction	page 3
Achievements in restoration	page 4
Public Awareness, information and training	page 6
Infrastructure and Service Networks	page 7
Specific problems in developing sustainable solutions to preservation	page 8
Draft Proposal for the designation of Historic Cairo as a Special Preservation District	page 9

Annexes:

Mission Programme with list of monuments and sites	Annex 1
Conclusions and recommendations adopted at the International Symposium of Islamic Cairo 16-20 February 2002	Annex II
Decisions adopted at the 28 th session of the World Heritage Committee, Suzhou 200	Annex III

Introduction

The earthquake on 12 October 1992 raised serious concern about the already precarious condition of the architectural heritage of Cairo. The accumulated problems prompted the Minister of Culture to launch upon a major programme for development of Historic Cairo in May 1998. By Decree no. 1352 an inter-ministerial institutional framework was created involving seven ministries and the Governor of Cairo. Shortly thereafter Historic Cairo Development Project, *Al-Qahira al-Tarikhiyya*, was launched to initiate, implement and coordinate an ambitious programme of restoration projects. The initial plan was to restore 147 listed and 48 unlisted historic monuments in eight years from 1998 to 2006, for which 250 mill. EP has been allocated.

Additionally an Advisory Committee for Historic Cairo Studies and Development Centre was established in a building in the Citadel with a staff of about 250 people, congenial office space and IT equipment in order to gather basic data and make suggestions for up-grating of urban space and streetscapes.

The scale of the programme required a large scale intervention, which was considered feasible only through the involvement of large contractors. Generally these companies lacked essential expertise and knowledge in restoration and were not very well prepared to deal with the delicate work of fine arts restoration. In the spring of 2001, there was thus a fear among the community of experts that the authentic architectural legacy of Historic Cairo was at stake. Subsequently the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO requested ICOMOS, as the advisory body to the World Heritage Committee, to send a Reactive Monitoring Mission to Cairo¹. The Ministry of Culture responded to the censure by organising an International Symposium on the Restoration and Conservation of Islamic Cairo, 15-20 February 2002, providing a forum for a constructive debate about the problems encountered and the possible visions for the future development of Historic Cairo².

The Conclusions and Recommendations of the Symposium were presented and discussed at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Suzhou 2004. The decisions adopted urged on the State Party to implement these recommendations and the Committee requested ICOMOS to undertake a new reactive monitoring mission in order to review the progress made in the ongoing rehabilitation programme³.

The present Reactive Monitoring Report is completed in fulfilment of the above recommendations. The actual mission took place from 9-16 March 2005⁴.

I should like to express special appreciation of the assistance offered by Mr. Ayman Abdel Moneim, First Secretary in Ministry of Culture and Head of the Project Administration as well as staff members of the Historic Cairo Project, especially architect Tarriq al-Murri, and the archaeologists Mohammed Rashedy and Mr. Gamal Mostafa.

¹ Flemming Aalund, *Reactive Monitoring Mission Report to Historic Cairo 6-18 August 2001*, submitted to ICOMOS.

² Conclusions and Recommendations of the Symposium is enclosed in Annex II.

³ Decisions adopted at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee: WHC-04/28.COM/15B is enclosed in Annex III

⁴ Mission programme with a list of monuments and sites visited is outlined in Annex I

Achievements in restoration.

The execution of the planned restoration projects was divided into four succeeding phases. A summary of current status indicates the following achievements:

- Phase one: 48 monuments; estimated cost 151 mill LE, app. 90 % completed.
- Phase two: 26 monuments; estimated cost 60 mill LE, app. 85 % completed.
- Phase three: 44 monuments; documents completed by consultants and the projects put out to tender.
- Phase four : 30 monuments; projects under preparation.

A complete list with names of the concerned buildings has been submitted to UNESCO as a hand written draft by the Egyptian Permanent Delegation to UNESCO on 15.2.2005.

It appears from the material presented to me in Cairo and site visits to more than 22 individual historic buildings and monuments within the historic district that the restoration process has taken a very positive approach to preservation of authentic qualities in design, material and workmanship as compared to the experience in 2001.

The first Reactive Monitoring Mission prompted an immediate suspension of all construction work until the contractors were able to verify that appropriate documentation of all interventions were carried out according to a set of standard requirements. Furthermore the use of Portland cement for plasters and mortars has been banned except for purely structural purposes and the extensive use of micro piles for consolidation of foundations are now being used much more cautiously to save money.

The technical analyses and documentation of the work being done is now of a better standard than it was before. Several of the contractors have set up specific restoration units to deal with the restoration projects and these units have gained considerable experience, including conservation of fine arts objects and architectural details such as polychrome paintings on wood. One individual firm affiliated to Aswan Est. has indicated that the number of employees is about 400 conservators full time and international co-operation is established to companies in France and Poland. Apparently a new market in restoration has materialised and gained momentum due to the Historic Cairo Project.

Without going into details with individual projects a few examples testify to the quality in restoration:

Beit Sitt Wasila (monument no. 445). This Ottoman house originally built in the 17th century near the Mosque of al-Azhar, has been restored from a very ruinous condition to represent a very fine example of a traditional house complete with the discovery of an unsuspected Fatimid fountain in the courtyard and reinstatement at the wall of the *Qaa* of a number of frescos, which were luckily rediscovered in some long time forgotten and hidden away boxes. However, no future use of the restored building has as yet been identified, but the urban space in front of the house has a great potential as a fine and attractive public urban space.

A few monuments have extraordinarily been included for restoration since the start of the Programme because of a special status and imminent risk of further deterioration:

Prince al Amir Taz Palace (no. 267). This Mamluk structure has been restored to a new dignity from a ruinous state, leaving parts of old masonry and traces of previous changes to the building in accord with recommendations in the Venice Charter, which testifies to the intricate historic development of this huge palace. The unexpected discovery of the water supply system complete with the water wheel, aqua ducts and cisterns add to the knowledge of the original water distribution system. The palace will serve partly as a Local Community Centre, including training in design and production of traditional carpets, and partly as a Historic City Museum with display of artefacts and architectural fragments.

The Sabil-Khutab of Muhammed Ali Ismail (no. 402)/ Nasharin Madrasa opposite the Qalaun Complex is under restoration to be used for a new Museum of Egyptian Textile from Pharaonic period to the time of Mohammed Ali. The large ruined structures behind the front building has been rebuilt and furnished with new showcases and the whole museum equipped as a museum of international standards. The opening is scheduled this July adding one more tourist attraction to the core of the Fatamid City eventually drawing a considerable number of tourists along the al Mu'eez Street. While it is positive that buildings are in current use, there is an imminent danger that too many tourist oriented functions located along the central axis will create a tourist destination at the expense of a living city.

In spite of the positive impressions gained from visiting a limited number of restoration projects there is still a need of precaution with respect to keeping the quality of patina and sign of age as a part of the authentic feeling of a monument, rather than complete renewal. This may in the end be a question of prioritising the investments. A few discouraging examples of the past have demonstrated how easily restoration principles can be compromised at enormous public spending, especially the Mosque of al-Hakim and Mosque of Amr Ibn al As, but to some extent as it has also been the case with the Mosque of al-Azhar and Ibn Tulun. The concept of 'preventive maintenance', which can be ensured through regular inspection and maintenance still need to be introduced as a standard procedure by SCA.

Previous proposal by UNESCO for the preparation of a basic 'Restoration Manual for Historic Monuments in Cairo' including the accumulated experience on appropriate techniques and materials, was abortive due to an unrealistically high cost suggested by the external consultant.

The restoration projects are concerned with monuments and less attention are being paid to the interrelationship between the building and the immediate surroundings. The feeling of the building and the harmonious relationship to the place requires a very sensitive analyse of the historic development of the site, if authenticity shall prevail. It appears that a fruitful dialog has been started between the HCP and the vendors. Traditionally setting up their stalls along the exterior wall of mosques this business is now being allowed to continue. Helping with an appropriate design of the stalls and exercising some control of the use, the HCP has wisely used a positive approach of 'give and take' gaining confidence through actively involving the population in the cause of improving there own environment.

The extensive use of modern light fixtures imbedded in the pavement is not a very sensitive approach to preservation of historic environments, and the general policy of illuminating the newly restored facades all over by floodlight need to be reviewed adopting a general policy for street furniture and street lighting. The Ahmed Ibn Tulun is but one example on how the feeling of spirituality easily disappears and the historic monument is turned into a stage set. A similar problem appears at the interior of many of the newly restored buildings, where the same type of standard up-lights are frequently used. It is furthermore a problem to plan the furnishing and related electrical fittings, when the building has no specific function assigned to it. Specific studies are necessary to find more appropriate solutions for the future, not least in immediate connection with the planned lowering of street levels and improvement of infrastructure.

The re-use of the many restored monuments is a pressing and challenging issue requiring a general review of the situation and the formulation of a general policy preventing piecemeal decisions from case to case. Of the 174 Islamic and Coptic monuments in the area of Fatimid Cairo scheduled for restoration, 137 are owned by the Ministry of Awqaf, 7 are privately owned and only 30 monuments are owned by the SCA⁵, indicating that the HCP has to go into a close dialogue with the owners, if they should have an influence on the future use of the restored buildings. Looking at Historic Cairo at large the situation is even more precarious with the great majority of the property (even as high as 95 %) administered or owned by the Ministry of Awqaf.

There is a real need to reach a balance between a variety of consideration and interests, which again points to the lack of authority, when it comes to decide on an overall strategy for the future of Historic Cairo and to strike a balance between the development of a tourist destination and a living city.

Public Awareness, information and training.

In keeping with the spirit and the stipulations of the World Heritage Convention awareness rising and active involvement of people living in the vicinity of the monuments should come in focus. The International Symposium in 2002 gave reason to a heated debate in the newspapers. Several of these constructive and engaging articles appeared in *al-Ahram Weekly* and *Al-Ahram Hebdo*, but I am not aware, if a similar debate has taken place in the Arabic press. The SCA acted in the defensive and since then the debate has largely faded away. Depending on point of view, it can be taken as a positive or a negative sign. Indeed the HCP should make a feat of involving the general public much more actively in the process by arranging meetings, press conferences and encourage similar public activities. Likewise, an active engagement with primary and secondary schools as well as the many associations and NGO's working in the field of heritage preservation would be a great asset.

The obligation of the State Party to strengthening appreciation and respect of the cultural heritage and to keeping the public broadly informed of the dangers threatening the heritage

⁵ in addition to 159 monuments scheduled for restoration by HCP, 15 are being restored by non-ministry missions according to info from Caroline Williams, Transforming the Old, Cairo's new Medieval City, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 56, no. 3, 2002 p. 467.

and the environment was emphasised in the first Monitoring Report with special reference to Article 27 of the World Heritage Convention.

As a direct result the Ministry of Culture emphasised on the need for documentation and presentation of the restoration work and the Supreme Council of Antiquities prepared a voluminous book on the Historic Cairo Project⁶ providing an outline of the basic information in English on the programme for the restoration of about 150 of a total of 450 registered monuments for the whole of Historic Cairo.

Furthermore the book presented an outline of the visions prepared by the Historic Cairo Studies and Development Centre. Whereas this study provided much needed data and graphic documentation of the social and physical structure of the historic areas, the proposals for upgrading and improvement of public urban space was far less convincing and will probably, if realised, have a devastating influence on the feeling of the special identity, the authenticity and historic character of the Islamic City.

The arrangement of the International Symposium on the Conservation and Restoration of Islamic Cairo was a very fortunate step to creating a broader and more open forum for public debate about the multitude of problems involved in cultural heritage preservation in a living city. Unfortunately attention to the seminar was limited to a very restricted number of people and the valuable Working Document prepared by UNESCO World Heritage Centre has been available only to the invited participants. Furthermore the Proceedings have not as yet been published.

During the recent years HCP has published a handful of monographs in Arabic on individual restoration projects and the intention is to publish such booklets on all completed projects. It is still to be seen if this policy might eventually lead to scientific research, concurrently with the establishment of an archive within the premises of the Citadel, where all data will be accessible to the public. A close co-operation with the International Research Centres currently working in Cairo will be of mutual benefit.

It was discussed during the mission that a formal career structure would be useful to motivate staff and improve professional performance. A private initiative to launch a three month full time training programme for about 20 SCA inspectors of Islamic and Coptic Sectors will partly depend on external funding⁷, but if this course materialise soon, it will contribute to a more systematic training of staff in cultural heritage preservation with focus on preventive maintenance. In a long perspective the SCA would gain from initiating a systematic training programme, which eventually might include time allocated for research and publication as a measure for the advancement of learning and promotion.

Infrastructure and Service Networks

The overriding problem of the rising water table and the run-down sewage and water supply system has been reiterated for many years. The implementation of a 250 Mill EP project in the northern part of the Fatimid part of Historic Cairo is a very positive sign of a more comprehensive approach to a sustainable development and preservation of the city. An Inter-

⁶ The Supreme Council of Antiquities, *Historic Cairo*, Cairo 2002

⁷ Application for ARCE Antiquities Endowment Fund by Nairy Hampikian and May al-Ibrashy 2004

ministerial Project Steering Committee is established with the Ministry of Housing acting as the responsible executing agency. It appears from the information presented that the project will make a complete renewal of infrastructure and service networks in the district at the same time as the street level in al Mu'eez Street will be lowered about 70 centimetres to the prevailing level in the 1920s and the original basal stone pavement will be reused.

This new scheme shows that HCH has developed a more holistic approach to preservation and goes beyond the primary mandate of restoring individual monuments. However, co-operation within the inter-ministerial committee is depending on a positive approach to the treatment of the heritage assets, which may not always have first priority. It was not made clear to which degree all the interrelated problems are being dealt with, such as change of levels between the main streets and the adjoining alleys, interference with the private property rights when entrance level change, involvement of the property owners for possible facade renovations, street lighting, street furniture and the like. But eventually this new approach will eliminate the very modern visions as previously proposed by Historic Cairo Studies and Development Centre and change the direction towards a more site specific, 'conservative surgery'.

Specific problems in developing sustainable solutions to preservation.

Whereas the admirable historic monuments and architectural complexes testify to Cairo's millennial splendour, the general impression is one of poverty, exacerbated by the neglect of public services, leaving the historic area as one of the poorest, most densely populated, and most disadvantaged parts of the metropolis.

Dwellings are overcrowded with a previous record of average 3.1 persons per room and the buildings are extremely rundown with about 50-60 % of dwellings in a state of deterioration. Population density has generally decreased in the last decades, but at the same time the proliferation of light industries after 1980s has threatened to destabilise the old city because of pollution and the harm it is doing to the buildings⁸.

The poverty of part of the population is indeed very alarming and the deploring situation becomes aggravated by the very high level of illiteracy among the population. It is estimated that about 50% of the inhabitants have education at primary school level or below and illiteracy among the women may be as high as 75 %⁹. Any sustainable preservation of the historic city therefore is obliged to include the social and economic aspects of development.

Statutory powers to manage the built environment rest with the Governorate, but the distribution of planning responsibilities is complex and co-ordination of planning initiatives between relevant ministries make the management and development of the city extremely difficult. New building permits are issued by the Governorate and preservation needs have not a first priority, likewise is the administration of height control sometimes exercised in an overbearing manner.

⁸ André Raymond, *Cairo*, Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 366.

⁹ Oral communication by Tariq al Murri.

Sites within the historic districts are especially at risk from uncontrolled development, and only listed monuments have a clear statutory protection by the Antiquities Protection Law. A register of the architectural and historical value of the great majority of buildings have not as yet been established. Each Historic District have there own historic and physical character, which need to be identified and analysed, including formulation of a Statement of Significance for each district that constitute the World Heritage Site¹⁰.

The Ministry of Awqaf in particular has a great influence on the standard of housing. Administering 90-95 % of the housing stock within Historic Cairo this ministry is a key shareholder in any sustainable effort for preservation and enhancement of the heritage, but so far this ministry lacks competence and interest in building restoration and urban improvement.

These observations have been reiterated in a long range of previous reports and recommendations, suggesting to form one agency with statutory power and adequate means and resources to deal with this complicated situation. The corporation would be responsible infrastructure and commercial development with an aim of integrating land-use, traffic, management of services and housing improvement schemes, defining and enforcing all building codes and regulations to conserve the character of the historic area, and undertaking mandatory reviews of all new construction in the area¹¹.

The situation is still in a deadlock, which has urged the various ministries to form *ad hoc* inter-ministerial committees to find appropriate solutions to individual problems as they may arise.

Decisions taken by the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee have urged on the Government of Egypt as a State party to the World Heritage Convention to find a constructive and lasting solution that will improve the management and co-ordination of activities with the World Heritage Site. An important step will be designation of Historic Cairo as one or several preservation districts. In pursuance of these recommendations it is now being proposed that UNESCO address this issue directly with the Presidency¹².

The subsequent practical implementation of an integrated preservation and development planning for the Designated Preservation Districts of Historic Cairo needs a careful survey of the existing distribution of responsibilities and the wise formulation of the mandate for future action.

Draft Proposal for designation of Historic Cairo as a Special Preservation District.

By including Islamic Cairo in the World Heritage List on 26 October 1979, the Government of Egypt and the World Heritage Committee have expressed their mutual commitment to the safeguarding of the historic city and its monuments.

¹⁰ One example can be drawn from the Danish SAVE System: Survey of Architectural Values in the Environment, which has been used to produce a large number of Municipal Atlases in Denmark.

¹¹ A reference to previous UNESCO reports is provided in Reactive Monitoring Mission Report 20001; see also Ismail Serageldin, A Proposal for Restoring Historic Cairo, *Medina*, no. 13, May-June 2000, pp. 38-42.

¹² Confer the full text of the recommendations in Annex III

The nomination was recommended by ICOMOS not only with reference to the unique historic significance and formal beauty of its monuments, but also emphasising the intrinsic social, political, economic and intellectual significance of this very ancient living urban structure through the centuries.

The succeeding studies and reports on the historic city have pointed to the fact that unsatisfactory housing conditions constitute a major reason for the social decline of the historic quarters and the deterioration of the built fabric. It has furthermore been reiterated that there is a need of a coherent strategic planning to guide an integrated development of the historic districts to help improving living conditions and ensuring a sustainable preservation of the cultural heritage.

Since the formation of the Historic Cairo Project in 1998 remarkable results have been achieved in restoring a large number of dilapidated historic monuments raising awareness of the unique and irreplaceable value of these buildings. Acting on behalf of the competent Ministry of Culture this initiative has now gained momentum, producing work of high quality with respect of authenticity in design, material and workmanship. However, the Supreme Council of Antiquities has only statutory control over listed monuments, and it is being felt, that there is a need for the establishing of an institution with legal authority and adequate means and resources to co-ordinate the activities and guide the future development of the historic city.

Recognition of the outstanding value of Islamic Cairo as an ensemble with special statutory protection would be an essential step towards the improvement of co-ordination among all concerned institutions and ministries, which will help to ensure a better and more efficient management of the site.

It is therefore recommended to designate the Historic Cairo within clearly defined borders of the World Heritage Site including an appropriate buffer zone as one planning district by special decree of the President. At the same time submitting a formal communication to the World Heritage Committee requesting to change the name of the original denomination of Islamic Cairo in favour of Historic Cairo, which is considered to better represent the exceptional variety and diversity of the heritage present in the city.

It is furthermore recommended that initiatives are taken to establish a responsible body for co-ordination of projects aiming at the rehabilitation of the urban fabric, improvement of infrastructure and social betterment of the living conditions within the historic districts along the lines proposed in the conclusions adopted at the International Symposium on the Conservation and Restoration of Historic Cairo in February 2002.

Copenhagen, 28 March 2005

Flemming Aalund, architect MAA, PhD

**Annex I: Programme for the Reactive Monitoring Mission to Islamic Cairo
9-16 March 2005.**

Wednesday 09/03/05

- Arrival 14.55 by Air

Thursday 10/03/05

- Meeting with the Supreme Committee of Historic Cairo Development Project at As- Silihdar Mosque.
- A progress presentation of Historic Cairo Development project.
- A review for As - Silihdar Mosque after restoration.

Friday 11/03/05

- Visit for Alexandria Museum.
- Visit for Sayyed Darweesh Theater.

Saturday 12/03/05 Visiting completed or almost complete restoration projects)

- 10.00 a.m: meeting with Dr. Zahi Hawass, Director General of Supreme Council of Antiquities.
- Mohmoud Moharam Mosque.
- Hammam Inal
- Az Zahir Barquq Madrasa.
- An Naser Madrasa.
- Al Ashrafeyya Madrassa.
- Wikalat Qaitbay
- As Set Wasseela House.
- Ibn Tulun Mosque

Sunday 13/03/05 (Monuments under consideration for restoration)

- Said Al So'daa Hamam (Bath) & Khankat.
- Abu Bakr Muzhir.
- Rebat Inial.
- Hammam al Sukariyya
- Ash Shabashiri House

- Qaitbay's House.
- Ash Shabashiri House
- Taqey Addin Al Bastami
- Qanibay Arramah – the citadel.

Monday 14/03/05 (-Monuments at risk added to the project)

- Prince Tazz Palace.
- Assadat House
- Meeting with Dr. Zahi Hawass, Director General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities

Tuesday 15/03/05

- Meetings in American Research Center.
- The National Egyptian Civilization Museum
- Pottery Training Centre at Fustat

Wednesday 16/03/05

- Departure at 16.00.

Annex II: Conclusions and recommendations adopted at the International Symposium of Islamic Cairo 16-20 February 2002.

**International Symposium on the Conservation and Restoration of Islamic Cairo
Cairo, 16-20 February 2002**

CONCLUSIONS - FINAL VERSION (20 February 2003)

Introduction

An International Symposium on the Conservation and Restoration of Islamic Cairo was organized by the Ministry of Culture of Egypt in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, from 16 to 20 February 2002 at Cairo. Attended by several world experts, both Egyptians and foreigners, on conservation of historic cities and Islamic architecture, the meeting included site visits, four thematic sessions on subjects related to the conservation of Islamic Cairo, as well as technical workshops on specific projects among those currently being implemented by the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

The present conclusions summarize the outcome of the Meeting and the main deliberations of the participants.

Recommendations

The Participants in the Symposium,

- Noting that Historic Cairo suffered in the past from severe environmental hazard, neglect, earthquakes and other major causes of deterioration;
- Having recognized the strong commitment shown by the Government of Egypt for the safeguarding of the site, and especially the great amount of work carried out in the recent years in response to the urgent situation;
- Noting with satisfaction the generalized use of an overall methodology of conservation and some initial promising results;
- Having appreciated the large extent and very high level of organization of the documentation assembled, and the good use of Information Technology, which may become an essential tool for educational initiatives and sharing of information;
- Emphasizing the importance of the social context within the framework of a policy for the conservation of Islamic Cairo;
- Taking into account the large number of restoration projects being presently carried out, and planned for the immediate future within Historic Cairo;
- Noting the efforts deployed by the Supreme Council of Antiquities in disseminating information on its activities, through both publications and street signs;

Have recommended the following¹:

1. That the Institutional framework and coordination mechanisms among the various concerned authorities for Historic Cairo be strengthened, taking into account the special character and complexity of the site;

¹ These recommendations are based on the reports of the rapporteurs of the various sessions, herewith annexed, as well as on the contributions of the experts presented during the Symposium.

2. That Islamic Cairo be designated as Special Planning District, including buffer zones, in accordance with the prescriptions of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention;
3. That a comprehensive Urban Plan for the Conservation and Development of Islamic Cairo be prepared, whereby the conservation of historic buildings would be accompanied by appropriate development regulations to encourage the rehabilitation of the urban fabric so as to ensure its compatibility with the historic character of Historic Cairo;
4. That particular attention be paid to ensure the vernacular character of the built stock, and that special emphasis be put on its rehabilitation;
5. That the Authorities continue their present efforts to improve the water supply, sewerage and road surfaces networks, whose delapidation was recognized as a major cause for the deterioration of the historic city;
6. That the Governorate and other concerned agencies pay special attention, in its planning for the old city of Cairo, to its status of World Heritage site and to the prescriptions contained in the Convention and its Operational Guidelines;
7. That the trend, emerged recently, whereby appropriate and compatible functions for non-religious historic buildings and future management mechanisms are determined, in consultation with all concerned parties, before starting any restoration work, with the exception of structural damage and other emergency situations, on a monument, be institutionalized;
8. That adequate resources be invested in capacity building and training in the area of architectural conservation and traditional craftsmanship;
9. That periodic monitoring and follow up to these recommendations be ensured in the form of regular meetings among Egyptian and International experts on current projects and overall policies for the conservation of Historic Cairo.

Annex III: Decisions adopted at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee, Suzhou 2004.

Islamic Cairo (Egypt)

Document : WHC-04/28.COM/15B

28 COM 15B.47 The World Heritage Committee,

1. Commends the State Party for the actions taken to rehabilitate the property by implementing conservations works on the historic buildings, reducing traffic and pollution and lowering the groundwater level;
2. Strongly encourages, the State Party however to implement the recommendations made by the International Symposium held in Cairo in February 2002, and particularly to:
 - a) designate Historic Cairo as a Special Planning District, with buffer zones, in accordance with the prescriptions of the *Operational Guidelines* (2002),
 - b) prepare a comprehensive Urban Plan for the Conservation and Development of the Old City, whereby the conservation of historic buildings would be accompanied by appropriate development regulations to encourage the rehabilitation of the urban fabric so as to ensure its compatibility with the historic character of Islamic Cairo,
 - c) organize regular meetings among Egyptian and International experts to review and discuss current conservation issues and projects.;
3. Requests ICOMOS in co-operation with the State Party, to undertake a mission to the property in order to review the progress made in the on-going rehabilitation programme on the monuments of the historic city and determine, the necessary steps towards the implementation of the above-recommendations;
4. Further requests the State Party to identify the exact boundaries of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone on a detailed topographic map at the appropriate scale and to submit it, together with a report on the progress made in the implementation of the above-recommendations, by 1 February 2005, for the consideration of the Committee at its 29th session in 2005.