

To the Permanent Delegations  
of UNESCO

6 June 2025

**Culture Sector**  
**The Assistant Director-General**

Ref: CLT/CEM/EOP/25/3266

**Subject: Call for support to UNESCO's Heritage Emergency Fund**

Sir/Madam,

As we commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNESCO's Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) in 2025, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to all Member States that have generously contributed to this vital mechanism over the past decade. Your contributions have strengthened our collective ability to act swiftly in times of emergencies, making a tangible difference in safeguarding invaluable cultural heritage and supporting affected communities.

On this milestone occasion, I would like to appeal to all Member States to join this crucial endeavor. The increasing frequency and severity of crises underscore the urgent need for enhanced solidarity and investment in safeguarding culture and recognizing its key role as a driver of resilience and recovery. The pooled and unearmarked nature of the Fund allows UNESCO to respond effectively and in an agile manner to emergencies, ensuring that culture continues to empower communities – in particular in times of crises – throughout the world.

The HEF has a unique niche area amongst the various flexible funding instruments that UNESCO deploys as part of its crisis response. The HEF strategically complements the pooled funds set up to support country specific action plans. It is designed to be pre-emptive. Not only does it play a key role in building preparedness, but funds can be deployed the moment that disaster strikes, bridging the gap, until additional funds can be secured to consolidate the emergency response. Above all, the rapid deployment of support from the HEF provides crucial time sensitive interventions that can mitigate the further deterioration of cultural heritage, from the stabilization of built heritage to the protection of cultural rights. Through a human-rights based approach, the HEF is a unique mechanism that protects culture in all its diversity.

The HEF is also a mechanism through which UNESCO can target Global Priorities, and Priority Groups. Since its establishment, the HEF has mobilized over US\$ 15.6 million and supported over 170 activities in nearly 100 countries around the world, including 28 in Africa and 17 Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The HEF has also supported the training of over 1,500 women in emergency preparedness and response, in addition to mainstreaming gender in the overall approach of the Fund and implementing gender transformative activities. Highlights of key results achieved globally are given in the 'Heritage Emergency Fund Fact Sheet' overleaf.

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These activities would not have been possible without the support of donors to the Fund: Andorra, Canada, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Qatar Fund for Development, Serbia, Slovakia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as private partners such as ANA Holdings INC. Beyond their precious financial support, these partners are members of a committed peer group, providing advice and feedback through the annual meetings of the HEF Donors' Advisory Group and receiving regular updates and reports.

We invite all Member States to reaffirm their commitment to safeguarding culture by contributing to the Fund and supporting UNESCO in widening its positive impact. This would enable our Organization to continue and upscale our efforts amid the ever-increasing number of contexts in which it is called upon to intervene.

For further details on how to contribute or engage with the HEF, please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Ms Krista Pikkat, Director of UNESCO's Culture and Emergencies Entity ([k.pikkat@unesco.org](mailto:k.pikkat@unesco.org)). Your support will be instrumental in upholding the principles of cultural diversity, peace, and international solidarity in the face of global challenges.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and support, and for your hopeful contribution to the HEF in 2025 during this special anniversary year.

Yours sincerely,

  
 Ernesto Ottone R.

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO  
UNESCO Field Offices

Enc.: HEF 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary factsheet