



Concept note for high-level event

## **Protecting endangered cultural heritage in times of conflict**

Tuesday 7 March 2017, 15:00 - 17:00 pm, United Nations Headquarters

### **Background**

As the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is well underway, The International Federation for Peace and Sustainable Development (IFPSD) continues to advocate for the preservation of cultural heritage which is a key element to achieving sustainable development on the ground.

It is within this context that IFPSD is planning a UN event on protecting endangered cultural heritage in times of conflict and on this occasion, Dr. Zahi Hawass will be officially appointed as IFPSD's Ambassador of cultural heritage. As a world-renowned archeologist, Dr. Hawass exerts his utmost efforts in advocating for these critical issues and during the event he will propose ideas and solutions as to how best to tackle these problems.

### **Objective**

This event will focus on raising awareness about the preservation of cultural heritage around the world and discussing the dire situation in Syria, Iraq and Libya. The overall objective is to encourage Member States and all relevant actors to support countries standing in the face of dark forces that seek to destroy their past, present and future. It is now more than ever that we need to safeguard heritage and adhere to UN resolution 2199 (2015), condemning the destruction of cultural heritage.

Sadly, cultural heritage is greatly at risk as a result of armed conflict and natural disasters and we must prevent the illicit trafficking and deliberate destruction of cultural heritage which is used as a war tactic. IFPSD along with UNESCO and other partners urges Member States to adhere to UN resolution 2199 (2015), condemning the destruction of cultural heritage. In the words of the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, Dr. Mohammed Ali al-Hakim *"the destruction of cultural heritage aims to erase the multicultural history of Iraq that has been the hallmark of our country"*.

We intend to invite the daughter of the great Syrian archeologist Khaled al-Assad, who was beheaded by ISIS as he refused to lead them to hidden Palmyra antiquities, will be offered an honorary award on behalf of her late father who is seen by so many as a hero. The event will be followed by a reception and a celebration of culture as a source of our identity.

## Speakers

Under-Secretary-General for Communications & Public Information, Ms. Cristina Gallach

Director-General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova

IFPSD's Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Safia Elemary

IFPSD's Ambassador of Cultural Heritage, Dr. Zahi Hawass

President of IFPSD, Ms. Salwa Kader



### **Official appointment of International Federation for Peace and Sustainable Development's Ambassador of cultural heritage, Dr. Zahi Hawass**

World-renowned archaeologist Zahi Hawass has served at most of the archaeological sites in Egypt during his career. He began as an inspector of antiquities and rose to the height of the profession in Egypt, becoming Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, as well as the first Minister of State for Antiquities.

He received his BA in Greek and Roman archaeology from Alexandria University and a diploma in Egyptology from Cairo University. His MA and PhD were granted by the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied as a Fulbright Fellow. Additionally, Dr. Hawass has received five honorary doctorates from various foreign universities. He has written more than 40 popular and academic books and more than 150 scholarly articles on his excavations, as well as innumerable pieces for Arabic and English newspapers and magazines.

Through the course of his career he has made a number of major discoveries, including the tombs of the pyramid-builders at Giza and the Valley of the Golden Mummies at Bahariya Oasis. He also discovered two new pyramids: One belonged to Khufu, and the other to the mother of King Teti, founder of the Sixth Dynasty. He directed the first Egyptian excavation in the Valley of the Kings, where he and his team not only discovered many important artifacts but also rediscovered one of the valley's "lost tombs," KV 53. Dr. Hawass's efforts also revealed the secret of the tunnel in the tomb of King Seti I. Along the nearby Theban West Bank, he led a team that excavated the northern entrance to the temple belonging to Amenhotep III. Here were found many statues of this powerful king in the company of a variety of deities. At Giza, he directed a scientific research team that used a robot to search for secret doors inside the Great Pyramid of Khufu.

One of Dr. Hawass's most important endeavors has been the Egyptian Mummy Project, which uses modern forensic techniques, including CT scans and DNA analysis, to answer questions about human remains from ancient Egypt. The EMP has resulted in several crucial findings, including identifications of the mummy of Queen Hatshepsut and members of the family of Tutankhamun, and the cause of death of Rameses III.

As an archaeologist deeply concerned with the conservation and protection of Egypt's monuments, Dr. Hawass supervised an extensive site management program for Coptic and Islamic sites. He also oversaw the conservation of the Great Sphinx and built 22 new museums throughout Egypt, among them the Grand Egyptian Museum near the Giza pyramids and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Old

Cairo. He also repatriated in excess of 6,000 stolen artifacts and trained more than 1,000 young archaeologists in museology and excavation techniques.

Dr. Hawass is known for his charisma and ability to reach out to the public, raising awareness of archaeology and the preservation of Egypt's precious heritage. He lectures internationally, with some audiences exceeding 4,500 attendees. Through these talks, he introduces his most important discoveries to the world. His dynamic personality and extensive knowledge have sparked global interest in ancient Egypt. He has brought the world of the pharaohs into the homes and hearts of people everywhere through numerous television appearances and books for the general readership. In 2006, Dr. Hawass received an Emmy Award from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for a documentary on ancient Egypt produced by KCBS in Los Angeles. Some of his most popular TV appearances have been *Mysteries of the Pyramids: Live from Cairo* with Omar Sharif, *Good Morning America* live from the Great Sphinx with Joan Lunden, and the *Today Show* with Matt Lauer.

He has appeared, too, in three live, prime-time productions for Fox Television. The first of these, in March 1999, was with Maury Povich; the second, in May 2000, was with actor Bill Pullman and host Hugh Downs; and the third was a look behind the hidden doors within the Great Pyramid through the use of a robot equipped with a fiberoptic camera. Dr. Hawass has also appeared in many documentaries produced by the BBC, Discovery Channel, National Geographic, the History Channel, PBS, and Nova, as well as many programs in Europe and Japan. One of the most famous TV shows is (*Chasing the Mummies*) by History Channel. The TV show was watched by millions of people all over the world.

He was chosen by the BBC for a profile representing Egypt in the new millennium and was featured by CNN in a short profile in 2008. National Geographic has produced a film on his life and work. He has been profiled in print by the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Times* of London, as well as other major newspapers and magazines.

Dr. Hawass has been instrumental in sending exhibitions of the treasures of King Tutankhamun abroad. The exhibit has toured many cities in America, Australia, Europe, and Japan, bringing more than \$125 million in revenue to Egypt.

Over the course of his career, Dr. Hawass has received numerous awards and honors. In 1998, the President of Egypt bestowed on him the First Class Award for Arts and Sciences, and he also received the Pride of Egypt Award from members of the foreign press in Egypt. Two years later, the Association of Egyptian-American Scholars named him Distinguished Scholar of the Year, and he was one of 30 international figures to receive the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement in honor of his accomplishments in archaeology. In July 2001, the National Geographic Society selected Dr. Hawass as one of its Explorers in Residence, and the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences granted him a Silver Medal and membership in the academy. During November of the next year, his name was inscribed on a CD carried by the 2003 mission of the Mars Exploration Rover. *Time* magazine chose him as one of the Top 100 Most Influential People for 2006. The following year he was made an officer in the French Order of Arts and Letters, and in 2008 he received the rank of commander in the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic. That same year, Dr. Hawass was presented with a World Tourism Award and designated a Goodwill Ambassador to Japan by the Egyptian and Japanese Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Dr. Hawass is now working with the Ministry of Tourism to promote travel to Egypt, and he has recently lectured in Canada, Germany, Switzerland, and Britain. The International Federation for Peace and Sustainable Development looks forward to joining forces with Dr. Hawass and ensuring that we advocate for the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide.

**Contact information** [info@usfmep.org](mailto:info@usfmep.org)