Assistance Program
in case of Emergencies

OVPM . OWHC . OCPM

INTRODUCTION

The General Secretariat of the OWHC has drawn up the *Assistance Program in case of Emergencies* (hereinafter the *Program*) to help members facing crisis situations. The *Program* is realistic and applicable, given the specific nature and constraints of the OWHC. It complements the assistance tools already offered to members and provides concrete help to member cities, thus enhancing the assistance accorded by other international organizations which have more experience and are better equipped to respond in the field to the physical consequences of crisis situations.

OBJECTIVES

The *Program* offers a collective approach to sharing best practices, in order to help member cities identify the risks they face, put in place prevention and mitigation mechanisms, and, ultimately, equip themselves with risk management tools.

FEATURES

The *Program* is designed primarily to help the most vulnerable member cities and improve the overall preparedness of OWHC cities. The approach requires detailed knowledge of the local heritage, including what makes it up and what characterizes it, in order to fully understand its vulnerability to the disaster risks to which the city is exposed by virtue of its geographical, geological, political, and other conditions. The *Program* takes into account all the natural and anthropological risks that may be identified by OWHC member cities.

The *Program* cannot be used to obtain financing, whether for the purchase or rental of equipment to deal with the material consequences of disasters, or for post-disaster consolidation and reconstruction work.

The specificity of the *Program* is to offer guidelines that will help local authorities to take or improve relevant measures to counter risks and organize prevention. The *Program* also includes the mobilization of appropriate expertise identified within the OWHC network, by sending experts on site, organizing study visits, or disseminating experiences to help cities implement their strategies.

ACTIVITIES

1. The *OWHC Risk-Preparedness Checklist* (hereinafter the *Checklist*) is an open-access document that can be used to support a local initiative and trigger awareness and mobilization of the various stakeholders regarding the risks threatening the historic center. The *Checklist* is a guide to help organize reflection with a view to reinforcing the effectiveness and scope of existing regulatory documents, or to generate political decisions to adopt such documents. It is therefore not intended to replace any disaster risk management plans or protocols the city may already have in place, but is intended to focus specifically on the "World Heritage Site" component.

   The *Checklist* can help less prepared cities by raising awareness of the importance of identifying risks, preventing them, and mitigating the effects of a crisis. Better-prepared cities can use the *Checklist* to identify specific areas where external expertise may be required. The *Checklist* is included herein.

2. *Diagnostic Reports* analyze the cities' state of awareness and their commitment to taking appropriate measures to manage their risks. The accumulation of *Diagnostic Reports* will make it possible to measure the level of preparedness of member cities, and to pool experience in order to speed up the implementation of effective measures. In particular, they serve to track the development of thinking in each city and the results of measures

taken. Throughout the process, they also reveal how local expertise is being strengthened, and what needs for external expertise can be proposed as part of the *Program*.

Diagnostic Reports are established by the OWHC on the basis of information provided by cities during regional workshops.

3.   *Technical Assistance* may be requested by cities within the framework of the *Program*. This assistance, established in accordance with the *Checklist*, focuses in particular on risk identification and prevention or response measures. Depending on specific situations, the *Program* may also respond to requests for assistance from cities facing emergency situations, as characterized within the framework of the *Program* and subject to available budgets (expert missions: travel, stays and, where applicable, fees).

4.   A *Database* will be established to collect information and documents produced by member cities relating to the identification, prevention, and mitigation of risks in historic centers. The *Database* will also include the *Diagnostic Reports* and *Checklists* adopted as part of the *Program* and, progressively, useful references to international examples and programs in the field.