



## Haiti Blue Shield Statement

**14<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

The Blue Shield expresses its sorrow and solidarity with the population of Haiti for the loss of lives and the destructions caused by the earthquake which occurred on 12<sup>th</sup> January.

Culture is a basic need, and cultural heritage a symbolic necessity that gives meaning to human lives connecting past, present and future. Cultural heritage is a reference full of values helping to restore a sense of normality and enabling people to move forward. Cultural Heritage is fundamental in rebuilding the identity, the dignity and the hope of the communities after a catastrophe.

The Blue Shield Mission is “to work to protect the world’s cultural heritage threatened by armed conflict, natural and man-made disasters”. While it appreciates that the immediate priority is to find the missing, and to help the injured and homeless, it places the expertise and network of its member organisations at the disposal of their Haitian colleagues to support their work in assessing the damage to the cultural heritage of their countries including libraries, archives, museums and monuments and sites, and subsequent recovery, restoration and repair measures.

The Blue Shield calls on the international community, responsible authorities and local population to give the fullest possible support to the efforts, official and voluntary, underway to protect/rescue the rich and unique heritage of Haiti.

The member organisations of the Blue Shield are currently liaising with Haitian colleagues, to obtain further information on both the situation in the area and on the possible needs and types of help required so as to mobilise our networks accordingly.

A more complete report on damages, needs and actions will be published subsequently, to facilitate coordination.

## The Blue Shield

The Blue Shield is the protective emblem of the 1954 Hague Convention which is the basic international treaty formulating rules to protect cultural heritage during armed conflicts. The Blue Shield network consists of organisations dealing with museums, archives, audiovisual supports, libraries, monuments and sites.

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS), founded in 1996, comprises representatives of the five Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in this field:

- The International Council on Archives ([www.ica.org](http://www.ica.org)),
- The International Council of Museums ([www.icom.museum](http://www.icom.museum)),
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites ([www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org)), and
- The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions ([www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org))
- The Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations ([www.ccaaa.org](http://www.ccaaa.org))

National Blue Shield Committees have been founded in a number of countries (18 established and 18 under construction). The Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS), founded in December 2008, will coordinate and strengthen international efforts to protect cultural property at risk of destruction in armed conflicts or natural disasters. The ANCBS has its headquarters in The Hague.

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**The actions of the Blue Shield can also be followed on**

- our Website : <http://www.blueshield-international.org>
- Facebook: "[Haiti 2010 Blue Shield Solidarity](#)" group
- Twitter : [blueshieldcoop](#)