



Press Release

Amsterdam, July 13 2009

Ancient Georgian monastery saved with support from the Prince Claus Fund

The Nikozi monastery complex, one of the oldest Episcopal sites in Georgia suffered badly during the Georgian – Russian conflict of August 2008

The Nikozi Episcopal Palace (9th-10th c.), part of the monastery complex, was directly bombed on the 10th August and damaged in the resulting fire. The emergency stabilization works ideally should have been conducted immediately. This was however not possible, as it took a number of months before Georgian and international experts were allowed access to the territory under Russian occupation. Today a group of experts including Heino van Houwelingen, Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands visited the monastery to see the progress of the reconstruction.

The Nikozi monastery complex is located in the Laikvi River gorge, 2 km from Tskhinvali. The monastery is one of the foremost examples of medieval palace architecture and is also significant for its role in the promotion of Christianity throughout the region. The monastery complex still serves as an Episcopal Chair of the Tskhinvali Eparchy.

The project supplies emergency repair works and aims to stabilize of the situation and prevent further deterioration, in particular: consolidation of the architectural structure and the erection of a temporary roofing to prevent further water damage. These emergency measures will prevent the building from collapse before funds have been secured for the full rehabilitation of the site. The Georgian Arts and Culture Center (GACC) is implementing the emergency relief project.

The Cultural Emergency Response (CER) programme of the Prince Claus Fund has funded the project. CER provides first aid for cultural heritage damaged or destroyed in conflict or natural disasters. By providing financial support within six months of the disaster, CER aims to stabilize the situation, prevent further damage and implement basic repairs.

The Nikozi project is also funded by the Council of Europe.

Georgian Arts & Culture Center (GACC), the Georgian Non Governmental Organization was founded in 1995. Its mission is preservation, development and promotion of Georgian cultural heritage; development, promotion and marketing of Georgian national crafts; strengthening the economic viability and self-sustainability of cultural institutions, culture based small and medium businesses, and individuals working in culture and the arts sector. GACC together with Conservazione Beni Culturali (CBC), Roma Italy, is the Europa Nostra 2006 Award (medal) winner.

Cultural Emergency Response (CER) provides global “first aid” for cultural heritages that have been damaged or destroyed by man-made or natural disasters. CER is a Prince Claus Fund programme. CER was launched in 2003 in reaction to the looting of the National Museum of Baghdad that shocked the world. Since then it has provided aid to cultural heritage in emergency situations in over twenty countries throughout the world.

The Prince Claus Fund is a platform for intercultural exchange. It works jointly with individuals and organisations that are mainly located in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean on the realisation of activities and publications that contribute to a positive exchange between culture and development. The Prince Claus Fund is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Postal Code Lottery.

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The Nikozi monastery after the bombing in 2008



The Nikozi monastery after the Cultural Emergency Response action