



Prins Claus Fonds voor
Cultuur en Ontwikkeling



Press release

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Severe damage to cultural heritage in West Sumatra

Rapid damage assessment by Prince Claus Fund and Indonesian Heritage Trust indicates that at least 146 historic buildings suffered damage in the earthquake of 30 September

On September 30 a tragic earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter scale struck West Sumatra and damaged hundreds of buildings in the harbour city of Padang. In the last few weeks a group of Indonesian cultural heritage professionals assessed the state of a total of 156 important historic buildings of which 15 buildings require immediate intervention. In two of these buildings, namely the Balai Kota Padang (Padang town-hall) and the Masjid Raya Ginting mosque (the oldest in Padang), action must be undertaken urgently or they will almost certainly collapse within a matter of months.

Preliminary results show that 75 heritage buildings are heavily damaged, 50 buildings moderately damaged, 21 buildings lightly damaged and 10 buildings intact. The facades of many historic houses which characterize the streetscape of the historic city centre have also been damaged; as well as more than 300 pieces from the valuable ceramic collection of the Museum Adityawarman – partner museum of Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden where the exhibition Sumatra Tercinta is currently showing.

Through support of the Cultural Emergency Response (CER) Programme of the Prince Claus Fund, the Indonesian Heritage Trust was able to assess the damages to heritage and identify the conservation needs and priorities. The Indonesian Heritage Trust will follow up the rapid assessment with rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. The Prince Claus Fund is currently researching its possibilities to contribute to these efforts. Additional support given by other institutions, locally and internationally, is necessary to cover the great needs.

CER has previously cooperated with the Indonesian Heritage Trust for restoring the mosque in the village of Rao-Rao which suffered extensive damage in the earthquake that hit West Sumatra on 6 March 2007. The earthquake caused the mosque's roof to shift, which could have led to its eventual collapse. CER provided immediate assistance for the reinforcement of the supporting walls and roof so that the mosque would become eligible for long-term restoration. A sum of €25,000 was made available.

The Prince Claus Fund actively seeks international cultural collaborations with partners of excellence in spaces of need. The Prince Claus Fund provides immediate cultural rescue as well as support to sustainable cultural processes. It takes initiatives to raise awareness on the importance of culture in everyday life and for development. The Fund works in the spirit of Prince Claus' belief that one cannot develop people, but people develop themselves. The Prince Claus Fund is based in Amsterdam and is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Postcode Lottery. www.princeclausfund.org

Cultural Emergency Response (CER) provides "first aid" for cultural heritage that has been damaged or destroyed by man-made or natural disasters. CER is a programme of the Prince Claus Fund. 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 thirty countries throughout the world.

Indonesian Heritage Trust - Badan Pelestarian Pusaka Indonesia (BPPI) The Indonesian Heritage Trust is a civil society organization aiming at strengthening and assisting heritage conservation in Indonesia. Indonesia has very rich and diverse culture, with 700 ethnic groups, each with its language, local wisdom and tradition. The Indonesian archipelago has more than 17,000 islands with a unique diversity of flora and fauna and natural resources. www.bppi-indonesianheritage.org

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