

ADDRESS OF DR. HİDAYET YAVUZ NUHOĞLU, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL  
OF THE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE -IRCICA  
AT THE OPENING OF THE FOURTH WORKSHOP MOSTAR 2004  
Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 20 July 1998

~~Your Excellency the President,~~  
~~Your Excellency Mr. Prime Minister,~~ Your Excellency the Mayor of Mostar,  
~~Honourable members of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina,~~  
Distinguished Heads and representatives of international organisations,  
universities and institutions, Honourable guests, Dear participants,

I am honoured to extend you a warm welcome on the occasion of the Fourth Architectural Workshop Mostar 2004 and to convey to you the greetings of His Excellency Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Director General of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture – IRCICA and his colleagues. The purpose of this permanent architectural program is to implement, organise and coordinate the study, restoration and preservation of the heritage of Bosnia and Hercegovina by mobilising international efforts for the rebuilding process. As symbolised by the name of the project, the goal is to meet in a fully restored city of Mostar in the year 2004, which will also be a landmark year in the rebuilding process of the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am most pleased to note that the tasks entrusted to this fourth workshop, which is the second one to be held in Mostar, provide evidence that the program has achieved success and continuity thanks to the strong will and firm commitment that the participating and supporting bodies have put in it.

IRCICA's involvement in and support for the cause of Bosnia and Hercegovina took shape as a matter of cultural and historical conscience. Starting from the beginning of the war, at a time when some thought Bosnia was a no-man's land and there was no one around, the Centre, believing that Bosnia is the land of its people and that there must be someone there, devised multidisciplinary programs involving research, publications, public relations and restoration projects. These programs and projects were appreciated and encouraged by the Islamic Summit and Ministerial Conferences of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. As a result of the studies which were directed and conducted by two Bosnian colleagues who had joined IRCICA during the period of the war, the Centre published several books, set up a documentation unit, organised travelling exhibitions of documents and photographs, all of them aiming to create and reinforce world-wide public awareness about the historical, architectural and cultural heritage of Bosnia and Hercegovina. In the framework of the same activity program, the Centre launched a series of architectural workshops entitled "Architectural Heritage Today - Mostar 2004", which are implemented in multiple stages under the high patronage of His Excellency President Alija Izetbegovic, in cooperation with their esteemed Government. We may recall that the first and second workshops were organised in Istanbul, in 1994 and 1995 respectively, with the participation of professionals and senior architectural students from around the world. The third workshop, held in July 1997, was organised in cooperation with the Municipality of Mostar and with contributions from the United Nations Development Program, UNESCO, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the World Monuments Fund. The workshop comprised seminars, lectures, field work, studio work, exhibitions of plans and designs. The participants dealt with both theoretical and technical issues and made proposals for a comprehensive restoration scheme which emphasises the distinctive multicultural characteristics of the Old Town of Mostar.



✓ We believe the present workshop will further expand the work accomplished so far and lay new foundation stones for the restoration process. Its convening in the city of Mostar represents a resolute joint effort for rebuilding the multicultural core of Mostar, the Old Bridge and its surroundings, which form an area of immense historical value. Its architecture displays an exemplary history of multicultural coexistence of the different cultures. In this land, people of different faiths lived together for several centuries in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. The aggression against Bosnia destroyed the assets, the physical infrastructure and the architectural monuments, but it could not destroy the positive spirit and cooperative outlook which were inherited by historical experience. The restoration of the tangible heritage will not only re-establish the structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina but also prove the confluence of the international community in maintaining peace between peoples of different cultures. We wholeheartedly believe this project will be successfully realised. To some, it might seem to be an utopia; according to us, it already proved feasible.

It is satisfactory indeed that international interest in the restoration and preservation of the heritage assets and monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina has increased gradually over the years within and outside of the scope of this project. Today, many governmental and non-governmental organisations, institutions and personalities are expressing their interest in and extending their contributions to the process. The network of cooperation established on basis of the technical and architectural documents has generated voluntary efforts in addition to the involvement of the professionals. In fact, thanks to the Mostar 2004 project, the restoration and preservation of the Bosnian heritage has become part of the curricula of about forty architectural faculties from America to Australia; in addition, hundreds of professionals have become well versed in the subject. We believe the present workshop will further contribute in strengthening and expanding the process through the participants' technical and academic works. The workshop will also be an opportunity to secure more international support for the actual implementation of the reconstruction, which will be the next stage after the follow-up of the present workshop.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay a respectful tribute to His Excellency President Alija Izetbegovic, the Government and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and wish that their heroic endeavours will fully be rewarded by a glorious and prosperous future for their present and coming generations. I would like to warmly thank the Municipality of Mostar for the excellent arrangements related to the organisation of the workshop. I also wish to express my gratitude to all those international organisations, institutions and personalities who contributed and will contribute in rebuilding the architectural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, I express my thanks and appreciation to my colleague Architect Dr. Amir Pasic, who is in charge with the project at IRCICA. I extend my thanks and appreciation to all the participants and wish them a successful workshop.

I would like to conclude my words by expressing the hope that cultural heritage will never be attacked or undermined in any part of the world again. We hope what was experienced in Bosnia a few years ago will not recur in Kosovo; but we are confident that any heritage asset that may be destroyed will be rebuilt through the efforts of institutions such as IRCICA who are committed to its preservation and eternal existence. Thank you.

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My words by expressing the hope that cultural work of undertaken in any part of the world again. I hope that any day, a few years ago will not tear in the efforts of institutions such as IRDICA who are and eternal of service. Thank you.

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