

UNESCO to help government protect, promote Pakistan's cultural heritage

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) says it is committed to supporting the government for the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritages of Pakistan.

Pakistan has diverse cultural heritage, which has a great potential to contribute to promoting sustainable development in the country.

These remarks were expressed by Dr Gwang-jo Kim, director of UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, on his visit to UNESCO world heritage site Rohtas Fort located at the close vicinity of Islamabad on Friday.

He was accompanied by Dr Kozue Kay Nagata, director/representative of UNESCO in Islamabad, and other senior colleagues.

Officials of the Rohtas Fort received Dr Gwang-Jo Kim and briefed him on the historical perspectives and the various initiatives of the government for the protection and restoration of the fort. Dr Gwang-Jo Kim showed keen interest in the fort and appreciated the rich and diverse heritage of Pakistan.

He also applauded the role of the Punjab Department of Archaeology and assured that UNESCO would continue to support protection of world heritage sites in Pakistan "which are of outstanding universal value".

Rohtas Fort was inscribed on the world heritage list in 1997, and is an outstanding example of the early Muslim military architecture in the sub continent as well as Central and South Asia which blends architectural and artistic tradition from Turkey and the subcontinent. It has also a profound influence on the development of architectural style in the Mughal Empire. Situated at a distance of 16km north-west of Jhelum city, the fort was built by Sher Shah Suri in 16th century (1541) and was being used by the empire until the death of Aurangzeb in 1707AD. Later on, the fort remained under the occupation of Durrani's and Sikhs rulers during 18th and 19th centuries.

UNESCO Pakistan under its cultural section is working to promote and protect the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Pakistan, with the aim of contributing towards economic growth and poverty reduction besides helping the federal government as state party responsible for fulfilling international commitments towards the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Moreover, several initiatives have also been undertaken to support the nurture creative industries, indigenous knowledge and arts, local expressions, regional languages and cultural tourism for preserving the past, promoting the present and improving the future initiatives in culture.

Source: <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/01-Feb-2014/unesco-to-help-government-protect-promote-pakistan-s-cultural-heritage>