



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

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Information released January 20, 2009 to present

### Media Note

#### Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC

January 7, 2009

## "The Future of Babylon" Project

The U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce its support of a project to develop a plan for the management and preservation of the archaeological site of Babylon. Funded to nearly \$700,000, this project will be carried out by the World Monuments Fund (WMF) in partnership with the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH). Babylon stands out among Iraq's rich contributions to humanity and "The Future of Babylon" project exemplifies the American people's commitment to the preservation of human heritage and their respect for the cultural heritage of Iraq.

The management plan is expected to be completed within two years. Using a process driven by the significance of the site and the interests of the Iraqi stakeholders, the project will identify the purposes for which the site will be conserved and managed, and specify goals and policies to direct, guide, and regulate future uses and interventions at the site. The SBAH has dedicated a group of professional staff to collaborate on the planning and fieldwork tasks for the Babylon project. This process will produce methodologies for site management to benefit heritage sites throughout Iraq.

WMF, which has worked for over 40 years with communities and countries around the world to support the conservation and preservation of endangered architectural and cultural heritage sites, will collaborate with the SBAH on the Babylon site management plan as part of a larger ongoing project, the Getty Conservation Institute-World Monuments Fund joint "Initiative to Conserve Iraqi Cultural Heritage." Among the goals of the Babylon project will be the development of technologically and culturally appropriate conservation solutions that also meet international standards; incorporation of holistic preservation approaches embracing environmental, social and economic factors; and economic self-sufficiency. For more information, visit [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org).

The Cultural Heritage Center of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supports foreign affairs functions related to the preservation of cultural heritage. Since 2003, the Center has supported numerous projects directed at safeguarding Iraq's cultural heritage and is currently engaged in the Iraq Cultural Heritage Project to assist in the preservation of the ancient history of Iraq.

For more information, visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/chc.html>.

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<http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/01/113648.htm>