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WORLD CLASS MUSEOLOGY AND CONSERVATION TRAINING PROGRAMME IN CAIRO.

The Levantine Foundation (TLF) and Sawiris Foundation for Social Development (SFSD) will organize a graduation ceremony of 100 trainees, at Sofitel Hotel, Cairo, on the 25th of November. TLF, a charity registered in England and Egypt, has provided the trainees with a world-class training programme in Paper and Book Conservation, while SFSD provided all the related funds for this project. The project has been implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Antiquities, The National Library and Archives of Egypt and Leiden University.

The training programme, which has been developed by academics specializing in Christian and Islamic history, art history, codicology and experts in the field of book and paper conservation, takes into account Egypt's unique cultural heritage and the intricacy of its ancient treasures. The aim of the Programme is to educate museum personnel to be able to handle their own conservation needs in order to be less dependent of foreign support.

More than 100 participants received hands-on training during the very successful 2010 programme for professionals from the leading museums, libraries and monastic collections in Egypt and MA students from the major universities in Cairo.

The objective of the TLF-SFSD project is to establish a better understanding of the basic practices of conservation, protection and maintenance of collections, development of skills and the creation of a safer environment for employees and museum collections alike. The projected result will lead to more qualified museum personnel, employment opportunities and the preservation of Egyptian heritage for future generation.

Commenting on the initiative, Professor Gannat El Samalouty, Executive Director of Sawiris Foundation said: " The Sawiris Foundation has been supporting the conservation of Egyptian cultural heritage and the development of local expertise in the field for a number of years, with the aim of boosting the number of skilled Egyptian conservators able to care for Egypt's cultural treasures and safeguard its heritage".

Commenting on the training programme, the main organizer, Elizabeth Sobczynski, said: "The singular motivation to organise a training of this type

was to encourage our Egyptian colleagues to interact directly with the Western experts, to share our knowledge and expertise that will lead to more qualified museum personnel, employment opportunities and the preservation of Egyptian heritage for future generations. We are honored to be working with the Ministry of Antiquities, The National Library and Archives and Leiden University. We are indebted to The Sawiris Foundation for Social Development for endorsing the programme and for their financial support”.

Dr. Khalil Nougaim, Executive Director of The Levantine Foundation in Egypt said: ”I am pleased that our work in setting up the Foundation a few years ago is already yielding results. I look forward to see more and more courses offered in Egypt for the training of conservators and for the museum staff, particularly in view of the vast collections of antiquities available in Egypt”.

For more information about the training programme, contact:
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About the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development

The Sawiris Foundation’s mission is to contribute to Egypt’s development, create sustainable job opportunities, and empower citizens to build productive lives that realize their full potential. The Foundation supports initiatives that encourage job creation through training, education and access to microcredit. It also supports efforts to improve health and further the endeavors of local communities to improve infrastructure and gain access to basic services. For more information about SFSD’s work please visit: www.sawirisfoundation.org

About the Levantine Foundation

The Levantine Foundation is a charitable company registered in England and Wales and The Arab Republic of Egypt, whose aim is to record and preserve cultural heritage on paper and related materials in the Near East through expertise, education, and dissemination of knowledge. For more information on TLF’s work, please visit www.thelevantinefoundation.org

About the Ministry of Antiquities

The MA is a government ministry whose mandate is to protect and promote the cultural heritage of Egypt, both independently and in cooperation with national and international organizations. Its role is to formulate and implement all policies concerned with antiquities; issues guidelines and permits for the excavation, restoration, conservation, documentation, and study of sites and monuments; and to manage a country-wide system of antiquities museums. For more information about MA’s work, please visit www.sca-egypt.org

About the National Library and Archives

The National Library of Egypt is the largest library and oldest government library in the world, which houses several million volumes on a wide range of topics. It houses thousands of ancient collections. It also contains a vast variety of language and other Eastern manuscripts. The Library provides services for researchers in the basic fields of: history, documents, and antiquities. For more information about NAE's work, please visit www.nationalarchives.gov.eg

About Leiden University

Leiden University has a centuries-old tradition in the research on Middle Eastern languages and culture. Its library preserves countless ancient manuscripts and is refurbished according to the highest standards to preserve its collection. Leiden's participation in the course resorts under the *Paul van Moorsel Centre for Christian Art and Culture in the Middle East* of the Leiden Institute of Religious Studies. For more information about LU's work please visit www.leiden.edu