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## **UNESCO: Reconstruction of the old bridge of Mostar**

**Inaugural session of expert committee on the reconstruction of the old bridge of Mostar**

**Mostar (Bosnia Herzegovina), November 19 {No.98-252}** - The International Committee of Experts appointed by UNESCO to set scientific standards for the reconstruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar held its inaugural session in the city this week.

In the presence of members of the diplomatic corps and representatives of the local and national authorities, Ivan Prskalo, the Mayor of Mostar, and Vice-Mayor Safet Orucevic welcomed Committee Experts. They expressed their strong support for the reconstruction of the Old Bridge of Mostar. "This will not be Ivan's bridge, nor Safet's bridge" the Mayor said in his inaugural address, "it will be the bridge of all the citizens of Mostar."

Léon Pressouyre, Chairman of the Expert Committee, introduced its ten members, distinguished specialists from a variety of countries. Their task will be to ensure the historical and cultural integrity of reconstruction and restoration activities.

Representatives of UNESCO and the World Bank reaffirmed that the project was the result of a partnership between the city of Mostar, UNESCO and the World Bank. To this joint effort the city brings the determination of the people of Mostar to live and work together, UNESCO provides its scientific expertise in the preservation of cultural heritage and the World Bank its record of financial and project management in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This partnership is open to all and many countries and institutions have expressed an interest in financing the reconstruction of the Old Bridge and the restoration of Mostar's cultural heritage, and several are already contributing actively to preparation activities.

The inauguration ceremony ended with a visit to the site of the Old Bridge and as a symbolic gesture of co-operation, Mayor Prskalo and Vice-Mayor Orucevic met and shook hands half-way across the temporary footbridge which has been erected next to the site of the Old Bridge.

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