

International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia

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Rescue & relocation of

22

MONUMENTS

Over a span of

20

YEARS

With contribution from

50

COUNTRIES

At a cost of

80

MILLION USD

“the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time”

The UNESCO Courier, 1980



The Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia

Along the banks of the life-giving Nile, civilizations have flourished from pre-history through Pharaonic, Graeco-Roman, Christian and Muslim times to the present day, leaving behind them a priceless legacy in architecture, sculpture and inscription.¹

In 1959, this cultural heritage was threatened with submersion by the waters of the artificial lake stretching 500 kilometres down the valley as far as the Dal Cataract in Sudan, which would eventually be created by the building of the Aswan High Dam. The Governments of Egypt and Sudan turned therefore to UNESCO and its Member States for cooperation, since its constitution made provision for the protection of the cultural heritage of mankind.¹

After UNESCO's Executive Board had studied a report by international experts on the feasibility of saving Nubia's inestimable treasures, the Director-General launched on 8 March 1960 a solemn appeal to governments, institutions, public and private foundations and all persons of goodwill,

requesting technical and financial contributions. The UNESCO International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, a campaign without precedent, thus began in 1960.¹

This appeal resulted in the excavation and recording of hundreds of sites, the recovery of thousands of objects, and the salvage and relocation of a number of important temples to higher ground, the most famous of them the temple complexes of Abu Simbel and Philae. The campaign ended on 10 March 1980 as a complete and spectacular success.²

Within the International Campaign, UNESCO played the role of a coordinator and intermediary between the donor States and the Egyptian and Sudanese Governments and facilitated their efforts to save the cultural heritage of Nubia. As a control panel for these activities, the Executive Committee of the International Campaign was created in 1960 and a Trust Fund was established.² The amount raised by the Campaign was USD 40 million and the total cost was USD 80 million.³



International Cooperation

For the first time, practical expression was given to the concept of a cultural heritage common to all the peoples of the world. The financial contributions of governments, needed to ensure the survival of the great monumental ensembles of Egypt, flowed into the UNESCO Trust Fund from the four corners of the earth. Seven countries in total provided technical assistance while 50 contributed to the campaign.¹

List of countries that contributed to the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia:¹

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Afghanistan | 26. Monaco |
| 2. Algeria | 27. Morocco |
| 3. Austria | 28. Nepal |
| 4. Belgium | 29. Netherlands |
| 5. China | 30. Nigeria |
| 6. Cuba | 31. Norway |
| 7. Cyprus | 32. Pakistan |
| 8. Democratic Kampuchea | 33. Philippines |
| 9. France | 34. Qatar |
| 10. Federal Republic of Germany | 35. Romania |
| 11. Ghana | 36. Saudi Arabia |
| 12. Greece | 37. Sierre Leone |
| 13. Holy See | 38. Spain |
| 14. India | 39. Sri Lanka |
| 15. Indonesia | 40. Sudan |
| 16. Iraq | 41. Syria |
| 17. Italy | 42. Sweden |
| 18. Japan | 43. Switzerland |
| 19. Kuwait | 44. Togo |
| 20. Lebanon | 45. Turkey |
| 21. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | 46. Uganda |
| 22. Luxembourg | 47. United Kingdom |
| 23. Malaysia | 48. United States of America |
| 24. Mali | 49. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| 25. Malta | 50. Yugoslavia |

In addition, Egypt donated four temples as tokens of its gratitude to countries which especially contributed to the success of the campaign: Debod to Spain, Taffa to the Netherlands, Dendur to the United States of America and Ellesyia to Italy.⁴

“ a triumph of international solidarity ”



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Photo by Przemyslaw "Blueshade" Idzkiewicz/ CC BY-SA 1.0



Photo by Arronestone20034/ CC BY-SA 4.0

1 Island of Philae



Photo by Dennis Jarvis/ CC BY-SA 2.0



Photo by Przemyslaw "Blueshade" Idzkiewicz/ CC BY-SA 2.0



Photo by Ahmed Emad Hamdy/ CC BY-SA 4.0

2 Abu Simbel

Monuments Rescued

The following monuments were threatened by the construction of the dam; they were reassembled in six groups:⁴

1. Island of Philae; temple complex
2. Abu Simbel; the two rock temples of Ramses II
3. Temple of Debod (gifted to Spain)
4. Temple of Taffa (gifted to the Netherlands)
5. Kiosk of Qertassi
6. The Temple at Kalabsha
7. Temple of Beit el-Wali



Photo by Osvaldo Gago/ CC BY-SA 2.0



Photo by Paul Garland/ CC BY-SA 2.0

3 Temple of Debod currently in Madrid

4 Temple of Taffa currently in Leiden



Photo by Dennis Jarvis/ CC BY-SA 2.0



Photo by Olaf Tausch/ CC BY 3.0



Photo by Roland Unger/ CC BY-SA 4.0



Photo by David Mateos García/ CC BY 2.5



Photo by Rgallois51/ CC BY-SA 3.0

5 Kiosk of Qertassi

6 The Temple at Kalabsha

7 Temple of Beit el-Wali

continued...



Photo by Dennis Jarvis/ CC BY-SA 2.0 Photo by Roland Unger/ CC BY-SA 4.0

8 Temple of Dakka



Photo by Olaf Tausch/ CC BY 3.0 Photo by Dennis Jarvis/ CC BY-SA 2.0

9 Temple of Maharraqa



Photo by Olaf Tausch/ CC BY 3.0 Photo by Olaf Tausch/ CC BY 3.0

10 Temple of Wadi es-Sebua



Photo by Dennis Jarvis/ CC BY-SA 2.0 Photo by Olaf Tausch/ CC BY 3.0

11 Temple of Amada

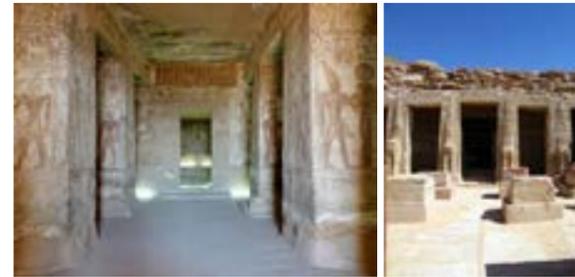


Photo by Olaf Tausch/ CC BY 3.0 Photo by Youssef Alam/ CC BY 3.0

12 Temple of Derr



Photo by David Schmid/ CC BY-SA 4.0

13 Temple of Elleysia currently in Turin



Photo by George Snyder/ CC BY 2.0 Photo by Olaf Tausch/ CC BY 3.0

15 Temple of Gerf Husein



Photo by The Met/ CC0 1.0 Photo by The Met/ CC0 1.0

16 Temple of Dendur currently in New York



Photo by Patricia Curcio/ CC BY-SA 3.0

17 Temple of Aksha



Photo by Hans Birger Nilsen/ CC BY-SA 2.0 Photo by Hans Birger Nilsen/ CC BY-SA 2.0

18 Temples at Buhen



Photo by Hans Birger Nilsen/ CC BY-SA 2.0 Photo by Matthias Gehricke/ CC BY-SA 4.0

19 Temple at Semna

Monuments Rescued

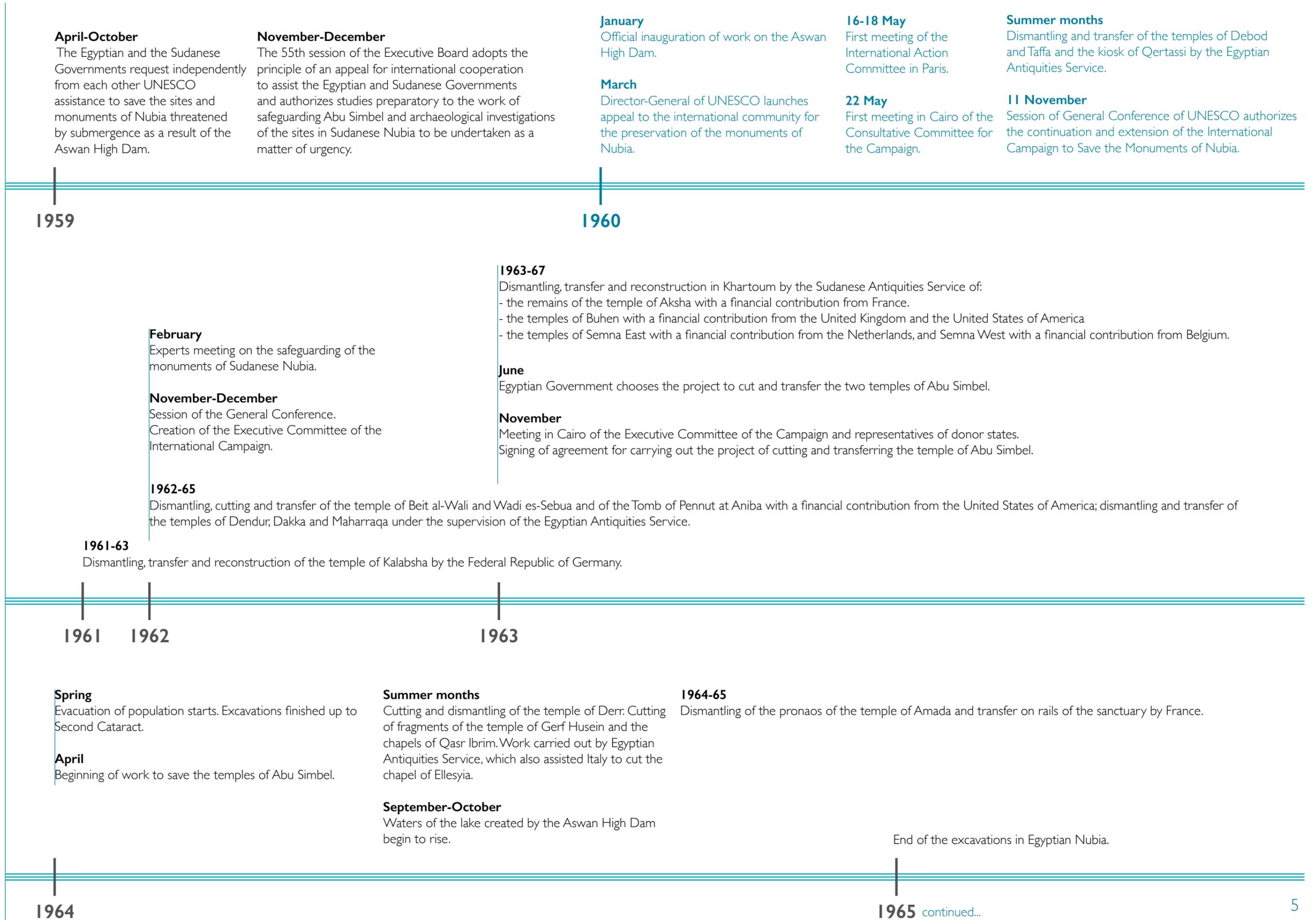
- 8. Temple of Dakka
- 9. Temple of Maharraqa
- 10. Temple of Wadi es-Sebua

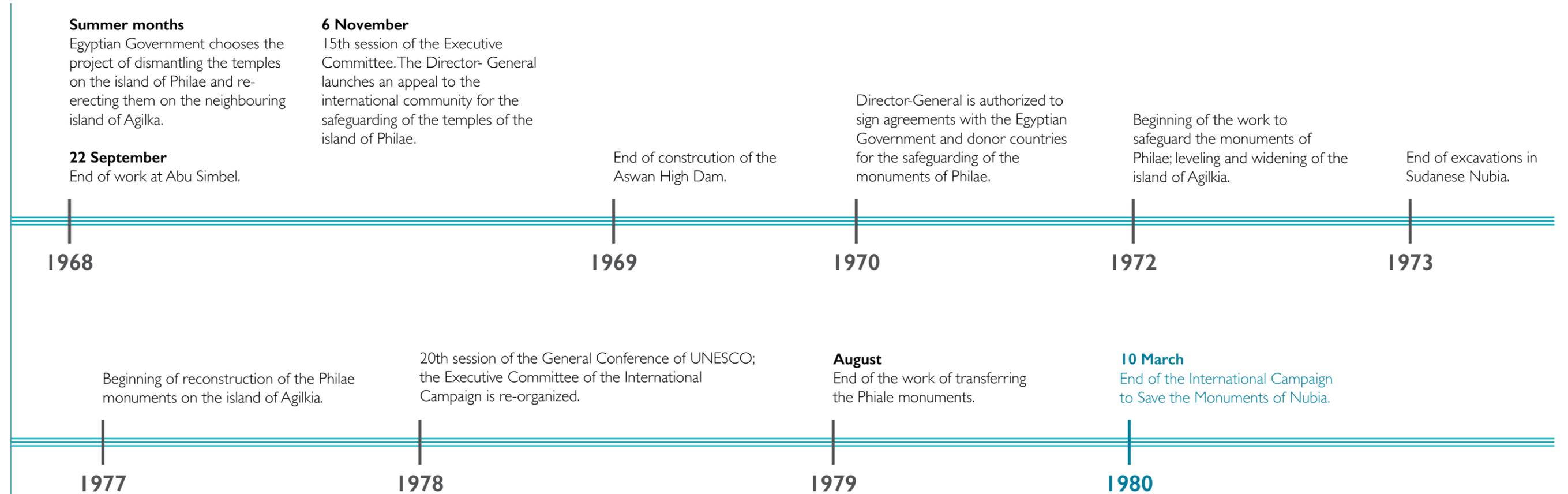
- 11. Temple of Amada
- 12. Temple of Derr

- 13. Temple of Elleysia (gifted to Italy)
- 14. Horemheb Temple at Abu Oda
- 15. Temple of Gerf Husein
- 16. Dendur (gifted to the USA)

In Sudanese Nubia:

- 17. Temple of Aksha
- 18. The temples in the fortified town of Buhen
- 19. The temples at Semna East and West fortresses





UNESCO World Heritage Convention



The idea of creating an international movement for protecting heritage emerged after World War I. The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage developed from the merging of two separate movements: the first focusing on the preservation of cultural sites, and the other dealing with the conservation of nature.⁶

The International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia was the event that inspired the initiation of the World Heritage Convention. Its success also led to other safeguarding campaigns, such as saving Venice and its Lagoon (Italy) and the Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro (Pakistan), and restoring the Borobodur Temple Compounds (Indonesia).⁶

¹ Nubia: a triumph of international solidarity; Official inauguration of the temples of Philae and the twentieth anniversary of the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, 10 March 1980/UNESCO

² Monuments of Nubia-International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia/UNESCO WHC Website

³ [UNESCO Website](#)

⁴ [The Rescue of Nubian Monuments and Sites/UNESCO WHC Website](#)

⁵ [Timeline: Salvage of the Monuments of Nubia/UNESCO](#)

⁶ [The World Heritage Convention/UNESCO WHC Website](#)

-Victory in Nubia: the greatest archaeological rescue operation of all time/The UNESCO Courier; Feb-Mar 1980

Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Completion of the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia

On 10 March 2020, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States in Cairo celebrated the completion of the renowned Nubian Campaign by organizing an event on the 40th anniversary of its completion.

In his welcoming statement, Dr Fariz, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for Sciences in the Arab States, drew attention to the impact of the Campaign that was far beyond Egypt, inspiring the preparation and adoption of the World Heritage Convention. He reiterated that the Campaign continued to be a beacon of international solidarity in protecting heritage and an outstanding example of successful international cooperation among UNESCO, the Government of Egypt (one of the founding members of UNESCO), and humanity at large. H.E. Dr. Khaled El Anany, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, then delivered a welcome statement and keynote presentation. The Minister presented how the international community supported this extraordinary Campaign by providing financial and technical assistance, rescuing over 20 monuments and an architectural complex, including the Abu Simbel and Philae Temples, and setting the example of international solidarity based on the understanding of the universal nature of heritage and the importance of its conservation and transmission.

The event at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization provided the opportunity for a renewed commitment of the international community to the importance of heritage preservation for sustainable development.



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