Concept Note:
Producing the 'ICOMOS Policy Guidance on Cultural Heritage for the Sustainable Development Goals'

A Project of the ICOMOS on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Working Group,
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Background

• In 2015, the role of culture and heritage in sustainable development was timidly recognized by the UN, in Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This recognition is expressed most clearly in Target 11.4 to "protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage" in order to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (SDG11, the Urban Goal).

• Shortly after, in 2016, the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) adopted the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in its summit Habitat III. The NUA, which laid out how cities should be managed sustainably, also features several references to cultural heritage.

• Progress on achieving Target 11.4 is measured by the UN through Indicator 11.4.1 on per capita public and private 'expenditure'. The indicator is as yet not well developed, and with a Tier III status, reporting on the Target could be improved both through 11.4.1 and alternative indicators.

• Progress on each SDG is reviewed by the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), at the UN Headquarters in New York City, in July of every third year on a rotating basis. SDG11 was first reviewed in HLPF 2018, where ICOMOS was present and contributed to the advocacy and discussions. However, the HLPF 2018 declaration did not feature cultural heritage, and general visibility of the topic was observed to be unsatisfactory. The next SDG11 review will be in July 2021. As ICOMOS, we aim for Target 11.4 and the topic of cultural heritage to have an improved presence and stronger voice in the HLPF agenda and other SDGs processes.

• Heritage is not just monuments, it is a non-renewable evolving resource supporting identity, memory and 'sense of place', and has a crucial role in achieving sustainable development. It

enables social cohesion, fosters socio-economic regeneration, stimulating growth and poverty reduction (job creation, sustainable consumption & production, creative industries and innovation). It increases the density of urban cores, strengthening social fabric and fostering social well-being, improving the appeal and creativity of regions, and enhancing long-term tourism benefits by preserving cultural resources. We must take up the challenge of conserving this fragile, non-renewable resource for current and future generations. Both cultural and natural heritage sites, while under immense pressure from the impacts of urbanization, climate change and degradation due to other natural and human factors, play a crucial role supporting local economies, livelihoods and quality of life in human settlements. (ICOMOS 17GA, 18GA, ICOMOS/IUCN at HLPF2018).

Problem statement

While SDG 11.4 has received greater attention since 2016, the role of cultural heritage- and culture in general- currently remains marginal in sustainable development discussions and SDG processes. Much work has been done worldwide to broaden the spirit of SDG 11.4, but the role of culture and cultural heritage's contribution to all SDGs still needs improvements, not just in the development of assessment tools and indicators, but widespread presence in communication, alignment, coordination and advocacy with the broader sustainable development field.

- Simultaneously, explicit attention by heritage professionals to the role of SDGs in their work remains partial and uneven. This disconnection is leading to missed opportunities for synergy building, effective advocacy in core development frameworks, and global agenda-setting based on scientific evidence, dialogues and robust arguments.

- Addressing this problem falls under the working area of international agencies, such as UNESCO and UN-Habitat, and national and local governments, which are officially mandated to deal with related issues. It is also the responsibility of civil society and expert networks, such as ICOMOS, who have versatile working methods and engage with society at different levels - e.g. national committees, a key for localizing SDGs. This responsibility also needs to be eventually shared by actors outside the heritage sector, recognizing the relevance and potential benefits of interdisciplinary collaborations.

- While the contribution of culture and cultural heritage to SDGs has been highlighted in some documents and many advocacy events have been organized to that effect, these have been either too academic, broad, vague or small-scaled, lacking the desired ultimate impact. There still needs to be a substantive product, i.e. a document to guide heritage professionals and stakeholders in aligning their work to the SDGs, as a basic and effective tool.

Overall goal

As the leading global NGO dealing with the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, ICOMOS is committed to fulfilling its share of the responsibility by producing a robust Policy Guidance document by the summer of 2021, in close partnership with relevant stakeholders. This Policy Guidance will help ICOMOS fulfill its role as the main voice of the cultural heritage NGO sector, building synergy and strengthening advocacy for a broader and stronger impact of cultural heritage in sustainable development processes, while providing a scientific resource to inform evidence-based policy and discussion on the topic. The Policy Guidance will provide robust guidelines and policy frameworks suitable both for global, high-level policies and for local, grassroots implementation and elaboration of these policies.

Methodology

To achieve this goal, to ensure that the Policy Guidance is built upon a wide and solid base of scientific expertise sourced from ICOMOS membership, and to attain higher visibility, impact and outreach to international stakeholders:

- The draft concept note will be circulated among SDG Working Group for feedback and revision.

- During the annual 2019 ICOMOS ADCOM held in Marrakech, two events will be held to receive feedback and input on the structural content of the policy guidance, and address some of the identified gaps, in collaboration with essential partners (i.e. UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UCLG, ISOCARP, IFLA, IUCN, OWHC).. First, a preliminary Knowledge Café will be held during the Scientific Symposium on the 17th of October, then an ICOMOS SDGs Working Group expert meeting will take place on 19th October.

- Further feedback will be solicited through online questionnaire circulated amongst ICOMOS International Scientific Committees (ISCs)/National Committees (NCs) and individual members.
    - Gather input from and feature contributing statements from ICOMOS (ISCs), targeting all 28, but focusing on about 10;
    - Gather input from and feature contributing statements from ICOMOS NCs, targeting balanced representation from all five global regions, focusing on about 20-30 countries.

- A draft Policy Guidance will be prepared based on received feedback and launched at a dedicated event at the World Urban Forum (WUF10) in 2020.

- The finalized Policy Guidance will be launched at High-Level Political Forum (HLFP) 2021 (2nd review of SDG11.4), also with a dedicated event.

Tentative approach and structure of the Policy Guidance

The Policy Guidance will be an ICOMOS-authored publication, but its content will be aligned with UNESCO documents, such as the World Heritage and Sustainable Development Policy of 2015 and Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation, as well as other advocacy documents produced on this topic by organizations such as IUCN, UCLG and UN.

It is conceived as a work that evolves over time thanks to the contributions of ICOMOS members, but also of key international partners. The first step consists in defining the conceptual framework of cultural heritage and sustainable development with reference to the advocacy role that ICOMOS plays in this context. Activities and good practices already carried out by ICOMOS to integrate cultural heritage and SDGs will be also identified and discussed, preparing the foundation for their improvement and the definition of future work. The final goal is to provide practical guidance for the implementation of the SDGs through the means of cultural heritage.

The Policy Guidance will be structured as follows:
- **Foreword**

- **Introduction**

    - Issues that the publication aims to tackle;
    - Objective and methodology of the work - why such a document is needed, in this format, which audience it addresses;

- ○ Structure of the publication
- **ICOMOS and the Sustainable Development Goals: Integrating culture and development**
  - ○ It defines the conceptual framework of the SDG work, ICOMOS's role and cooperation activities ICOMOS had had with key partners
  - ○ It will include a:
    - Timeline (ICOMOS charters/doctrinal documents/events that could be related to the evolution of the discourse on culture and development/SDGs) → see UNESCO, Culture for the 2030 Agenda, pp. 8-9)
    - Table on ICOMOS charters/doctrinal documents/events and each SDG/Target (--> see UNESCO, Culture for the 2030 Agenda, pp. 10-11)
    - Geographical map of the events organized by ICOMOS on this topic (--> see UNESCO, Culture for the 2030 Agenda, p. 13)
- **1 or 2 pages for each SDG** including:
  - ○ A policy statement by ICOMOS
  - ○ Sentences from ICOMOS' charters/doctrinal texts that could be relevant
  - ○ Activities/good practices already carried by ICOMOS (possibly giving examples of quantitative data and compelling visuals if available)
- **The way forward**
  - ○ Conclusion of this work and outlining of future steps

Timeline of activities

- Summer 2019: Preparations for the Expert Meeting

- August - September 2019: consultation on the content of the Policy Guidance and drafting of the Concept Note

- October 2019: Preliminary results of the drafting exercise presented and discussed at the expert meeting on 19 October in Marrakech, Morocco.

- November 2019: Collect information from ISCs/National Committee/single members through online survey

- November 2019 - January 2020 Complete first draft of the Policy Guidance for presentation at the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10) in Abu Dhabi, UAE, 8-13 February 2020

- February 2020: Presentation of the draft Policy Guidance at WUF10

- Spring-Summer 2020: Workshops with experts and stakeholders for further refinement and revision of the Policy Guidance

- Fall 2020: Interim results of the process presented in 20th ICOMOS General Assembly (20GA) in Sydney, Australia

- Spring-Summer 2021: Policy Guidance final draft completed in time for the HLPF

- July 2021: Presentation of the draft Policy Guidance at the HLPF

List of basic references

1. ICOMOS Concept Note on Cultural Heritage, the UN SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, 2016:
https://www.usicomos.org/mainsite/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Final-Concept-Note.pdf
2. ICOMOS Action Plan on Cultural Heritage and Localizing the SDGs, 2017:
https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Secretariat/2017/
ICOMOS_Action_Plan_Cult_Heritage_and_Localizing_SDGs_20170721.pdf
3. ICOMOS Information Leaflet on the SDGs, 2017-2018:
https://www.icomos.org/en/focus/un-sustainable-development-goals/37090-latest-information-
leafleton-cultural-heritage-and-the-sdgs-now-online
4. UNESCO's 'Moving Forward the 2030 Agenda':
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247785
5. UNESCO's 'Culture Urban Future Report', 2016:
https://en.unesco.org/creativity/publication/culture-urban-future
6. IUCN and the Sustainable Development Goals:
https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/sdgs_-_uicn_-_web_-_eng.pdf
7. UCLG: Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals, A Guide for Local Action:
http://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/culturesdgs_web_en.pdf
See also the list of selected resources on the ICOMOS SDG web page:
https://www.icomos.org/en/focus/un-sustainable-development-goals/8774-selected-resources-
onheritage-and-sustainable-development