



INTERNATIONAL CO-SPONSORED MEETING ON CULTURE, HERITAGE & CLIMATE CHANGE

Press Release

Title: First ever UNESCO-IPCC-ICOMOS meeting to strengthen synergies between culture and climate change science

Strengthening synergies between culture and climate science in the common fight against climate change will be at the centre of the first ever meeting organised jointly by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) from 6 to 10 December 2021. The virtual **International Co-sponsored Meeting on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change** will bring together scientists and experts to explore linkages between culture and heritage, climate science and climate action. The objective is to advance heritage and culture-based actions for climate change adaptation and carbon mitigation.

Climate change represents one of the greatest threats to culture and heritage today, from fires, floods, and droughts, to the loss of living heritage practices and traditions. At the same time, culture has the potential to provide creative solutions and mitigation to these mounting challenges. Traditional, pre-carbon land- and water-management practices can provide a roadmap to post-carbon futures, while cultural practices and heritage places serve as psychological and physical refuges for communities during and after emergencies. Yet, culture and heritage have received limited attention in global climate science and responses thus far.

Jyoti Hosagrahar, Deputy Director World Heritage Centre, UNESCO, highlights that *“Culture and heritage are invaluable resources that provide solutions and must be fully recognized and engaged in effective climate action. UNESCO is delighted to join hands with other institutions to further this important goal.”*

Dr Debra Roberts, Co-chair of Working Group II (impacts, adaptation and vulnerability) at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), said: *“Ambitious climate action is dependent on a whole-of-society response. This meeting will explore the critical cultural/natural heritage-climate change nexus and marks an important opportunity to mobilise knowledge that could help us create an equitable low carbon and climate resilient future.”*

The meeting will bring together over one hundred, gender-balanced experts from 45 countries across all regions and will bring research, expertise, and insights from wide disciplines. This meeting aims to establish a scientific merit to integrate cultural dimensions in climate action through three key areas: (1) vulnerability and understanding risks, (2) intangible cultural heritage, diverse knowledge systems and climate change, and (3) the role of cultural and natural heritage for climate action. In preparation for the event, three white papers have been commissioned to explore these axes and these will act as conversation starters for the event. Participants will also have the opportunity to present their own research at the Meeting. The meeting will include public-facing events on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, details of which can be found on the project website.

Assessing the links between culture, heritage and climate change responses will also serve as a catalyst for new research, projects, and publications on culture, heritage, and climate action in advance of the IPCC's upcoming 7th Assessment cycle, and beyond.

Dr William Megarry, International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Focal Point for Climate Change and Cultural Heritage, agrees that *“Climate change is the single greatest threat to our global cultural and natural heritage. Cultural heritage is a key asset for climate action. ICOMOS looks forward to exploring this further in our December workshop.”*

“The International Co-sponsored Meeting on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change represents a milestone in the longstanding efforts by ICOMOS to enhance the incorporation of culture and heritage into climate science in general and the work of the IPCC in particular,” said Teresa Patricio, President of ICOMOS. *“I thank colleagues around the world who have been a part of these efforts over the years,”* Ms Patricio continued, adding *“the Co-Sponsored Meeting is an enormous step forward, but we still have much to do. Everyone’s help will be needed to see that the Meeting’s recommendations are taken forward, including in connection with the IPCC’s 2022-2028 seventh assessment cycle (AR7) as it addresses issues critical to tackling the climate emergency like cities and climate change and the Paris Agreement global stocktake.”*

Project partners include the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI). The International Conference is primarily funded by The German Federal Environmental Foundation with additional support from the Swiss Federal Office of Culture and The National Cultural Heritage Administration of China.

Please note that UNESCO, ICOMOS and IPCC co-sponsorship does not imply UNESCO, ICOMOS or IPCC endorsement or approval of the workshop proceedings or any recommendations or conclusions thereof. Neither the papers presented at the workshop nor the report of its proceedings will have been subject to UNESCO, ICOMOS or IPCC review.

For more information, please visit the project website: <https://www.cultureclimatemeeting.org/>

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