

Agenda item 6-6-1**Resolution 20GA/15 - Cultural Heritage and the Climate Emergency**

Submitted by the Climate Change and Heritage Working Group, International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes ICOMOS-IFLA, International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism (ICTC), International Scientific Committee on Earthen Architectural Heritage (ISCEAH), International Scientific Committee on Economics of Conservation (ISCEC), International Scientific Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICICH), International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICORP), ICOMOS New Zealand and ICOMOS Spain, with the support of 47 members

The 20th General Assembly of ICOMOS,

Recalling Resolution 19GA 2017/30, which recognises that human activities are producing unprecedented concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHG) that are changing the climate, and calls on ICOMOS to meet the challenge of climate change by finding cultural heritage-based solutions to implement the Paris Agreement;

Noting that in 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its special report “Global Warming of 1.5 °C found that climate change impacts on both human and natural systems may be long-lasting or irreversible, that these impacts are even now adversely affecting cultural heritage, and that the ability of some heritage sites to successfully adapt will depend on the rate of global GHG mitigation efforts;

Acknowledging that the IPCC Report found that for many systems, adaptation is expected to be more challenging at 2 °C of global warming than at 1.5 °C, and that therefore the impacts, losses, and damages to cultural heritage from climate change must be appropriately addressed immediately at all levels;

Recognising that the world is failing to meet the Paris Agreement targets, with current GHG concentrations the highest ever recorded, and that at the same time the reality and human cost of climate change has been thrown into even sharper relief through mean sea level rise, and elevated temperatures and wildfires;

Recognising the immense potential of cultural heritage to enable inclusive, transformative and just climate action, including through heightening the ambition and capacity of communities to act, supporting climate adaptation and resilience, contributing to mitigation interventions to reduce GHG emissions, and addressing loss and damage from climate impacts;

Acknowledging that the present COVID-19 pandemic has revealed some essential lessons, including the imperative of heeding science, the consequences of a breakdown between humans and nature, the importance of centering on the needs of the most vulnerable, and the fact that rapid and far-reaching social and economic change is possible when society wills it;

Noting that in November 2019, more than 11,000 scientists jointly declared that Earth is clearly and unequivocally facing a climate emergency and that many countries, jurisdictions and organisations have similarly acknowledged and declared this emergency;

Declares a Climate and Ecological Emergency and calls upon other culture and heritage organisations to do the same;

Reiterates the need to better integrate cultural heritage and climate research and science, and in this regard;

Welcomes the proposal for the ICOMOS Triennial Scientific Plan, and the June 2020 decision of the IPCC to approve the joint proposal of UNESCO and ICOMOS for an IPCC International Expert Meeting on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change to be held in 2021;

Calls for urgent collective action by all relevant actors to safeguard cultural and natural heritage from climate change, including through vulnerability assessment and adaptive management and also through implementation of a collective precautionary approach that pursues pathways for

limiting global warming to 1.5°C;

Thanks the Climate Change Heritage Working Group, the 32 National Committees (NCs) and International Scientific Committees (ISCs) and the almost 50 invited experts for their contributions to the ICOMOS Report “The Future of Our Pasts”, published in 2019 which scopes numerous ways in which cultural heritage can drive climate action and also catalogues the many climate change impacts on diverse kinds of heritage;

Notes the ICOMOS Triennial Scientific Plan Reboot invitation on climate action during 2021 to collaboratively identify ways and means to expand knowledge and define good practice for supporting heritage responses to climate change;

Calls on all the ICOMOS community to implement heritage responses to climate change that:

- Seek to safeguard all types of heritages from the current and projected adverse impacts of climate change, both rapid and slow onset, by undertaking vulnerability and risk assessments, monitoring, and by implementing appropriate, climate change adaptation strategies and risk-informed, disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery strategies;
- Implement appropriate, climate change adaptation strategies and risk-informed, disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery strategies;
- Seek to realise the potential of cultural heritage - including both tangible and intangible heritage and local communities' knowledge and practices - to contribute to transformative change, drive GHG mitigation and climate adaptation, and deliver climate resilient pathways that strengthen sustainable development;
- Seek to connect heritage responses to climate change with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG13 on Climate Action, in order to ensure these responses are holistic and include the social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of sustainability, as well as those of peace, justice and partnerships;
- Recognise that existing heritage conservation practice, tools, assessments and methodologies will need to be supplemented with new, cooperative, transdisciplinary and participatory approaches and models relevant to the global issue of climate change;
- Recognise equity and justice as fundamental to understanding and addressing the challenges of climate change, including through solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable and frontline communities; participatory climate governance; and gender-responsive, human rights and rights-based approaches;
- Integrate the conservation of nature and culture, endogenous and traditional knowledge, and landscape-scale approaches into policies and programmes where appropriate.

Encourages all ICOMOS National Committees to adopt climate change-related programmes in their own countries, including actions to better protect heritage from climate impacts; to enhance participation in climate change networks such as the Climate Heritage Network; and to engage governments and other relevant external parties on applicable climate policy and planning processes, for example to secure inclusion of cultural heritage in national climate adaptation frameworks.

Encourages all ICOMOS International Scientific Committees to adopt climate change-related programmes and activities in their own remits, including working to make familiarity with climate change a baseline competency of heritage management, and to see that good conservation practice is modified as needed to find alternative ways and means of sustaining heritage significance amidst a changing climate;

Encourages the organisers of all ICOMOS events to take into account their carbon footprint and plans to reduce it.
